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BOSTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

FOREIGN INFLUENCES IN JEREMIAH

by

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Oberlin, Ohio

submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

1935

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Introduction

1. Purpose of the present study - It is true that religion at its purest and deepest is a spiritual thing, which in its essence cannot be moved or influenced by words or any temporal events. Yet it is just this sharp cleavage between the things of the spirit and the things of earth that often makes religion seem a useless thing, unappealing to those who cannot feel that life here and now is uninteresting or unimportant. It seems to me that the events and situations of this present life are connected with the spiritual realm of values in two definite ways. I maintain that values are created by the material world; that without physical experience there never could have developed a world of values. I further maintain that the physical world is a medium for the expression of the intangible things of the spirit. Since these things are so I maintain that a spiritual concept cannot be fully comprehended and appreciated without a knowledge of the physical conditions which brought it about. Thus, this present study is an attempt to get at some of the roots from which sprang the religious concepts of the prophet Jeremiah. It is intended to be a fairly careful study of one age of Hebrew history, an important age and a critical one, with the object of seeing how the historical events of that age shaped the religious ideals, ideals which are of permanent value altho the age which is responsible for their existence has long since vanished.

2. Jeremiah, the prophet - Lives of Jeremiah and eulogies on his work and importance there are in abundance, and it is not my purpose here to repeat in any detail what the best of these contain.



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I do wish here to emphasize a few things about Jeremiah that will help us to understand better the way in which events react on him. Personally he seems to have been a sensitive man, aware of moods and attitudes about him, alert to the impulses which came to him from the Infinite. He had an unusual amount of political sagacity and foresight. Prophecy was not to him a pleasure but a compulsion from Jehovah, for he lived in a time when he could prophecy only destruction of the things his people had hitherto held dearest. His importance as a prophet lies in the middle ground that he occupies between the earlier and the later prophets - he is the full fruition of the early prophetic movement and the inspiration of the later.

"It is his distinction to occupy the middle point in the history of prophecy. The great truths of religion, uttered by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, came to a focus in him by being made inward and personal. He, then, in turn, by his conception of the inwardness of religion, became the starting point of a new development, leading to the individualism of Ezekiel and the universalism of Deutero-Isaiah." 1.

3. Jeremiah's age - In reconstructing an age we are seeking to get a complete picture of the life, of the motives, of the moods and actions, rather than merely the dry bones of political history. It is the theory of Sinkhovitch that it is only as in constructive imagination we are able to picture the life of the many forgotten ones of an age that we come to full understanding and appreciation of the great remembered ones.

"For historical truth is not a bundle of documents. Documents are the raw materials, but not the structure. Historical truth is such a constructive insight into a given situation as to carry with it conviction of real life. Social life is then moving within its conditions of existence; and personalities, in their words and deeds, are correlated with their fellow men and appear in their historical,

1. Albert C. Knudson, The Beacon Lights of Prophecy, pp. 194, 195

that is, their representative capacity." 1.

The age of Jeremiah was internationally a tense, complicated and fast moving period of history. The essential struggle was between Assyria and the new Babylon, but Egypt played an important part, as did the barbaric bands from the north.

"The reign of Josiah was contemporary with that fierce struggle in which the protagonists were the dying Assyria and the young neo-Babylonian empire. Directly or indirectly the conflict involved practically the whole of the Near East. There was an interconnection of peoples, for a parallel to which we must go back to the Amarna Age. With a self-conscious and ambitious Egypt in the south, and with the movements of the Scythians and other hordes in the north, everything was in the melting pot, and no one could have foreseen who would inherit the might of Assyria. During the last years of Ashurbanipal the western states were freeing themselves from the Assyrian yoke. The invasion of Scythian bands (635-625) presumably facilitated this step; but too little is known of their movements..... Apparently the Scythians left Judah untouched, but there are passages in Jeremiah and Zephaniah which are commonly interpreted as depicting the consternation of the country at the uncouth ruthless horsemen prowling like wolves around the cities..... A few years later came the fall of Nineveh (July-August, 612 B.C.), hailed with delirious joy by those who supported the Babylonian cause." 2.

The small nations naturally became restless and somewhat disconcerted in the face of all this trouble, and they changed allegiances rapidly from one mighty power to another; they formed alliances among themselves; they revolted from rulers, but all to no avail, as Jeremiah clearly saw.

"Now the ancient prophet saw clearly that Judah was not a factor in the mighty contest at all, but that it was a catastrophic fight to the death between the rival rulers of the world. For him the supreme interest was that God was in the fight also, and this redeemed the fight from murder." 3.

Into all this seemingly meaningless political struggle Jeremiah was able to put a spiritual, a moral interpretation.

1. Vladimir G. Simkhovitch, Toward the Understanding of Jesus, p. 4

2. The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. III, p. 394

3. T. Crouther Gordon, The Rebel Prophet, p. 67

"This, then, is both the philosophy and the statesmanship of Jeremiah. Given men of honesty, religion and moral principle, no nation can go under. Given men of greed and immorality and irreligion, disaster is bound to ensue. He was certain that a strong and clean religion would produce the right men, men who could learn from every defeat and benefit by every triumph, men who, because they believed in a strong moral God, could not themselves be either weak or wicked." 1.

4. Concerning present day applications of this study - A complicated age in which things were so confused and moved so rapidly that no one could foresee what the world dominating power would be tomorrow, what combinations of nations would next be allied, what situation their own nation would next find itself in, bears resemblances to our own world too striking to be ignored. A sense of historical perspective, a vivid imagination picturing to itself the horrible and swift vicissitudes of fate thru which Judah passed in the single lifetime of Jeremiah may well prove a steadying thing to many modern minds. It is not, however, my purpose in this study to emphasize these modern connections. I am rather attempting what I consider the first duty of a student, to see clearly and vividly what was in that distant period. Applications to present life are important but impossible unless we first immerse ourselves in the past with no further goal than to know the truths in so far as it is knowable.

1. T. Crouther Gordon, The Rebel Prophet, p. 86

Chapter I. - THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

To familiarize oneself with the critical problems of the text on which is to rest a long subsequent discussion is a matter of utmost importance, if only in the matter of saving the time that might be wasted on the unauthentic parts of the book. In our particular case this is especially true, since the Book of Jeremiah presents many complicated critical problems and since it happens, perversely enough, that many of the passages that are most open to dispute as to whether they are truly Jeremianic, are rather central in the thought of the book and in the problem we have in hand. I propose here to deal with some of the general critical problems of the book as a basis of understanding and to pass from these to a consideration of some of the more important specific problems, most of which are directly connected with our problem of foreign influences.

1. The Hebrew and Greek Texts - The two texts of the book that we have, the Masoretic text and the Septuagint, both of them probably completed in their present form in the third century B. C., are significantly different. A. C. Welch says in the Abingdon Bible Commentary that the Septuagint contains only seven eighths of the material found in the Masoretic text. Most of the added material in the Masoretic^{text} consists of phrases and words inserted into the text, which are not in the Septuagint version. The word or phrase inserted into the Masoretic text often spoils the Hebrew poetics, and it is this fact which has given scholars some valuable suggestions as to what portions of the text may represent redactions at a period later than the original writing. This makes the Septuagint

an extremely important text, by some scholars ranked higher than the Masoretic text. Of the various differences in arrangement which exist between these two texts the most important is that the Oracles on foreign nations, comprising chapters 46 to 51 in our Bibles, are in the Septuagint placed between 25:13 and 25:15 and are arranged in a different order. The differences between these two versions are such as to make it fairly obvious that the Septuagint is not in this case a translation of the Masoretic^{text} but rather that there was a common text from which both versions were derived, their differences being accounted for by a divergent development thruout a period of time.

2. Sources of the Present Book - When we have postulated a common text as the source of both the Masoretic text and the Septuagint we are still far from getting back to the original form of the book, for the reason that it was persistently popular from the time of Jeremiah's death on.

"Not only from the time when the Hebrew and Greek editions of the Book started upon their separate times of development, but from the very beginnings of the Book's history, the work of accumulation, arrangement and re-arrangement, with other editorial processes had been busy upon it." 1.

George Adam Smith in his book, Jeremiah, (2.) gives the three sources for the present book. I am taking them over as headings for my discussion immediately following.

.A. Collections of genuine Oracles and Discourses of Jeremiah-
partly made by himself.

1. George Adam Smith, Jeremiah, p. 19

2. ibid, p. 29

Concerning the passages which represent genuine oracles and discourses of Jeremiah there is wide difference of opinion, among which, in regard to definite passages, it is not my purpose here to decide even if I possessed the competence to do so. My aim is rather to establish a general principle by which we may test specific passages as necessary. Professor Duhm insists on the readily applicable standard that the only passages which may be assigned to Jeremiah are those which are written as poetry, in fact as Qinah. This point of view, valuable as it is in focusing the attention of the English reader on the importance of poetry in the work of Jeremiah, is too inflexible and mechanical a standard to be used in judging the work of a man like Jeremiah.

"Nor is it credible that whatever the purpose of his message was - reminiscence, or dirge, or threat of doom, or call to repent, or a didactic purpose - Jeremiah, thruout the very various conditions of his long ministry of forty years, employed but one metre and that only in its strictest form allowing of no irregularities. This, I say, is not credible." 1.

Gordon suggests as a standard that we consider whether the specific passages are in keeping with the spirit of Jeremiah or not. This test has advantages over that of Duhm in that it is less mechanical, perhaps more penetrating into the essentials. To me, however, this too seems an inadequate standard, since it relies too much on internal evidence, which may easily be false. A standard suggested by Smith seems reasonable to me, since it avoids the stumbling-blocks of both Duhm and Gordon by being neither too mechanical nor too subjective.

"All Oracles or Narratives in the Book, which (apart from obvious intrusions) imply that the Exile is well advanced or that

1. George Adam Smith, Jeremiah, p. 39

the Return from the Exile has already happened, or which reflect the circumstances of the later Exile and subsequent periods on the spirit of Israel and the teaching of her prophets and scribes in those periods, we may rule out of the material on which we can rely for our knowledge of Jeremiah's life and his teaching." 1.

We have very definite documents which give us the conditions of the various periods, and we can use these pictures in determining the authenticity of passages in Jeremiah.

Concerning the prophecies which we are sure do come from Jeremiah himself there is a considerable amount of doubt as to the periods thruout his ministry from which specific passages come. Again I am not attempting the task requiring such a great amount of knowledge and unnecessary to my purpose of determining the dates of specific passages, but I am rather determining upon a general standard which can be applied as needed.

"The earlier prophecies of Jeremiah's book, unlike the later ones, are usually without specific dates and often, also somewhat general in their contents, so that probably they are not so much the actual text of particular discourses, as a reproduction of their substance, made by the prophet on basis of notes and recollections of his teaching at the time." 2.

The older the passage, then, the more general in nature it is likely to be; this at least is a good principle to work from, provided it be always borne in mind that no rule is absolute and that each passage must be individually handled.

B. Narratives of his life and times by a contemporary writer or writers, the principal, if not the only contributor to which is (in the opinion of most) the Scribe Baruch.

In the 36th chapter of Jeremiah we have a statement of how the book came to be written, a very definite piece of evidence for

1. George Adam Smith, Jeremiah, p. 19

2. S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 250

us. In about 604 B. C. Jeremiah was commanded to write down all the prophecies that he had given previous to that time, so that they might now be presented as a whole to the people and to King Jehoiakim. Both Jeremiah and Baruch, his scribe who had written the roll and presented it to the king, were forced to flee from the wrath which it aroused. While they were hiding until the king should be appeased or forget, Jeremiah put in the time by redictating the roll, and "added many things to it." If our suppositions are correct that this is the first appearance of Baruch in the life of Jeremiah and that he was the constant companion of the prophet from this time on, we have explained the fact that there are merely isolated oracles from Jeremiah's earlier life, but that from about 604 on the oracles are set in a narrative background. Baruch's faithful recording of Jeremiah's life from 604 to 586 gives us the most complete life of a prophet that we have, and makes the book very valuable. We are also indebted to Baruch for the many intimate glimpses that we get into the very soul of the prophet.

"It is highly probable that many of the sayings of Jeremiah that are here preserved were never intended 'for publication,' but were spoken directly to Baruch in the freedom of intimate intercourse, being set down by him as worthy of record, and they were. This would be especially true of the numerous passages which report Jeremiah's inner, personal, and spiritual experiences." 1.

C. Exilic and Post-exilic additions in various forms: long prophecies and narrative; shorter pieces included among the Prophet's own Oracles; and scattered titles, dates, notes, and glosses.

Unpopular as Jeremiah was in his lifetime, he seems very soon after his death to have been recognized and received as a great pro-

1. Lindsay B. Longacre, A Prophet of the Spirit, p. 18

phet. This meant that his book would have been much recopied, in which process errors due to carelessness and misunderstanding of the text would have crept into the manuscripts. The text would also have been deliberately revised by people who wished Jeremiah to say the things they particularly espoused. Probably the first such group to attack the book and change it, in the exiled community, were those who were still very enthusiastic about Deuteronomy.

"There is no doubt that the collected prophecies of Jeremiah passed thru the hands of the Deuteronomic school, and were freely edited by them. His discourses have been interpolated, amplified, in some instances rewritten." 1.

Then as the exile advanced there came a group more formal and ritualistic than even the Deuteronomist, the priests. These men are chiefly of importance as the preservers of the book, but it is hardly likely that they refrained from inserting phrases and words here and there that would make Jeremiah read more according to their tastes. There is an irony about the priests taking such good care as they did of the work of a man like Jeremiah whose essential religion was utterly different from theirs.

"And after all this opposition and bitterness between prophet and priest, it is to the priest that we owe the preservation of Jeremiah's teaching. His writings were preserved in the first instance by Baruch and perhaps other friends, but later it was the priests, the scribes and elders of the exiled community in Babylon who kept the manuscripts, copied and edited them and taught their doctrine. The fiercest denunciations, the most passionate accusations against all that they held dear were saved for us by the priests themselves. If they failed to recognize the prophets during their lives, the Jews certainly did it after their death." 2.

In addition to these changes, some of them quite fundamental, in the text itself, there were inserted in the book whole passages of ma-

1. John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, p. 102

2. Dorothea Stephen, Jeremiah, the Prophet of Hope, p. 24

terial for the purpose of insuring its reading by placing it under the patronage of the name of the great prophet Jeremiah, such a practice being perfectly acceptable in the moral code of the ancients. As to these passages, redactions, and glosses there is much dispute. We have occasion to discuss some of them in the study of specific passages.

3. Concerning the authenticity of certain specific passages

A. Jeremiah's call

The part of the call passage that is most called into question by scholars is 1:5b and 1:10.

1:5b "I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations"

1:10 "see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Duhm says that since this passage is in prose it cannot be an authentic part of the Book of Jeremiah; that the idea of a young man, living in a small Judean village, having the thought that he was called to be a prophet to the nations is so absurd as to stamp the whole passage as apocryphal. In my opinion, Skinner's approach to the subject is more reasonable. He says that Jeremiah had been continually living in an international world, that he had certain prophetic insight which would make him conscious of the important trends of his times. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the call of Jeremiah was probably far from being the initial contact with Jehovah but rather the culmination of a great many periods of serious thought.

"We cannot but feel that tho this may have been Jeremiah's

first vision of Yahwe it was not the beginning of his fellowship with Him. It is the consummation of a genuine religious experience, rooted probably in the pieties of home and early life, of a growing self-knowledge and knowledge of God, which now ripens into the consciousness of special mission." 1.

Such thought previous to his vision may well have turned on the international situation and its relation to the spiritual life of his people. I feel that the burden of proof certainly rests on those who would deny the authenticity of this passage on the call of Jeremiah. The subsequent developments in the life of our prophet give us every reason to believe that from the first he was conscious of the international bearing of his message.

B. Authenticity of the Passages relating to Deuteronomy.

Our problem concerning Jeremiah's relation to Deuteronomy, which was put into effect during the reign of Josiah in the early part of the ministry of Jeremiah, is well stated by McFadyen.

"It would be interesting to know what was Jeremiah's attitude to the law-book discovered and published in 621, but unfortunately the problems that gather round the text of Jeremiah are so vexatious that we cannot say with certainty. On the one hand, we know that, tho at that time a prophet of five years' standing, he was not consulted on the discovery of the book (II Kings 22:14); on the other hand, 11:1-14 explicitly connects him with an itinerant mission thruout the province of Judah for the purpose of inculcating the teaching of 'the words of this covenant', which can only be the book of Deuteronomy. But there is fairly good reason for supposing that this passage, which is diffuse, and very unlike the poems that follow it, vv. 15, 16, 18-20, is one of the many scribal additions to the book. Even if Jeremiah did support the Deuteronomic movement, he must have felt, in the words of Darnmesteter, that 'it is easier to reform the cult than the soul,' and that the real solution would never be found in the statutes of the law-book, but only in the law written upon the heart, 31:31-33. Here again this great prophecy of the law written upon the heart, has been denied to Jeremiah - by Duhm, for example: but at any rate it is con-

1. John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, p. 27

ceived in the spirit of the prophet." 1.

There are serious scholars who would disagree with McFadyen's statement that "the words of this covenant" can refer only to Deuteronomy. A. C. Welch positively states (2.) that this passage refers to a mission that Jeremiah took, probably in opposition to the Deuteronomic covenant, in favor of the old Mosaic covenant. König, according to Skinner, also feels that the covenant to which reference is here made is the Mosaic rather than the Deuteronomic. Skinner goes at the matter from a textual point of view. He recognizes clearly the fact that in 11:1-14 there have been many late additions by the hands of those who wished to make Jeremiah express their ideas. He thinks that by omitting entirely verses 7 and 8, as the Septuagint does, the passage can be made to fit into the life of Jeremiah, that altho there has been much Deuteronomic addition and change made in this passage there must be somewhere behind it a trustworthy tradition. As I see it, the difficulty with most critics is that they are reluctant to give to Jeremiah the human privilege of growing and changing his mind. They say that Deuteronomy is out of the spirit of Jeremiah, but they do not take account of the fact that there are fine spiritual passages in the code, that it looked as tho it might improve some of the very situations that the young prophet had been criticising, that it may have needed an attempt at operating this code to make Jeremiah fully realize that it was not in his spirit. I, therefore, follow Skinner's example and accept as authentic that Jeremiah favored the

1. John Edgar McFadyen, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 142
2. Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 704

Deuteronomic code at its inception.

C. Authenticity of oracles on the foreign nations.

The last six chapters of the Book of Jeremiah, which as we have said above are placed in chapter 25 of the Septuagint, have long been a problem to scholars as to whether they came from Jeremiah or not. Gordon in his impulsive and subjective manner insists that these passages could have come from no one but Jeremiah, who was called to be the prophet to the nations.

"I would go even farther, and claim that the messages to the nations in sheer consistency, must be laid to the credit of the central figure himself, Jeremiah, for they betray his poetic touch and issue the challenge and announce the doom straight from the mouth of Jehovah. For each and every people of which he knew, the prophet had a message and a policy, written out and ready, and now preserved for us in chapters 46-51." 1.

Lofthouse and Welch, who think of these prophecies as existing in a separate form, are ready tentatively to ascribe a few to Jeremiah but are far from regarding most of these as his work.

"These chapters form a collection of oracles dealing with the fate or the temper of the nations which influenced Judah about this period. The collection once existed in a separate form, since it was inserted by the LXX in the middle of ch. 25, a more suitable position for it than in its place in the Hebrew text. The oracles may have been collected in Palestine, but some of them were clearly uttered in Babylon and others in Egypt. They are also of varied dates, since parts of chs. 50 f. belong to the age of Cyrus, while 46:2-6 was probably uttered under the tremendous impression produced by the struggle at Carchemish between Egypt and Babylon for the empire of the world. Another significant feature of the oracles is that several of them appear elsewhere and are ascribed to other prophets than Jeremiah. They abound in names of cities and peoples." 2.

"Still later, a collection of prophecies on foreign nations, by various authors, was formed. Some of these may be by Jeremiah; the prophecy on Moab is very similar to that found in Obadiah; the

1. T. Crouther Gordon, The Rebel Prophet, pp. 65,66
2. A. C. Welch, Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 704

longest and most striking on Babylon, is certainly by a different author; its attitude to Babylon is entirely different from that of Jeremiah; and there is nothing in the other prophecies in this collection which, in the mind of the present writer, can be attributed with any confidence to Jeremiah." 1.

Skinner likewise thinks that the Jeremianic work in these oracles is fragmentary, and that what genuine pieces there are are hardly worth the tremendous effort it would take to extricate them.

"If we could believe, as some good scholars do, that ch. 46 contains genuine oracles of Jeremiah, we should have evidence that he watched the struggle with a gloating satisfaction over the impending overthrow of Egypt. But the whole of that chapter is so unlike anything else from the pen of Jeremiah that I must regard it as the work of an anonymous, perhaps contemporary, poet, with a genius akin to that of Nahum. The mixed authorship of the foreign prophecies in chs. 46-51 is generally recognized; and the efforts to disentangle a Jeremianic nucleus in the various oracles hardly repays the labour spent upon it." 2.

In view of these judgments by careful scholars of the Book I am omitting from this work all consideration of these Oracles.

Summary

A complete rejection of the Oracles on the nations, a reserved acceptance of the passages concerned with Jeremiah's relation to Deuteronomy, and a tendency to uphold the authenticity of the incident of his call as we have it recorded, are the positions that have been taken on three major critical problems of the Book. I have discussed the three major sources of the Book as listed by George Adam Smith, and I have considered the relative merits of the Masoretic and Septuagint texts. In this chapter I hope I have cleared the way for the succeeding sections of this discussion so that technical details of textual criticism will not impede our progress later on.

1. W. F. Lofthouse, Jeremiah and the New Covenant, p. 245

2. John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, pp. 239, 240, n.3

Chapter II. The Canaanitic Cults

1. Introduction - In picturing the religious situation in Jeremiah's Judah we must put much greater emphasis on the place of the Canaanitic cults in the life of the people than we have formerly done. We know that as the desert-dwelling Israelites migrated into Canaan they were confronted with the agricultural civilization of that land, with the fertility religions as an inherent and important part of the practice of agriculture. What we have failed to realize is that the Semitic religion of the invaders became and remained until a relatively late period deeply impregnated with the rites of the Canaanites. The Elephantine papyri have given us a very clear picture of the prevalent religious situation in Judah. These papyri come from a Jewish community, probably a garrison, living in Egypt about the fifth century before Christ. These Jews must have been exiled just before or at the time of Jeremiah, and by excepting Egyptian influences, of which there do not seem to be a great many, we may look to these documents to show not only the religious life in the community at Elephantine, but also the religious life which must have prevailed in Judah at the time that they left there. We find that these people recognize a supreme God, Ya'u or Yahweh, but that they give worship and sacrifices to at least four other gods of varying degrees of importance, whom we find named in the documents.

"Of these names 'Anath is known as that of a goddess in Syria and elsewhere, so that it has been suggested that 'Anathya'u was intended as a consort of Ya'u - the Queen of Heaven as He was the God of heaven. Bethel has long been recognized as an early Canaanite god. These two therefore may well have been brought by the colonists with them from Judaea. It was not a case of falling away from Monotheism, but a continuation of the pre-exilic popular beliefs. (Italics are mine.) Ishum may be the Babylonian demon of that name,

but it is also worth while to remember the persistent tradition that the Samaritans worshipped a divinity called Ashima." 1.

To see the situation in its true light, of a people very little, if any, superior in their religious conceptions and practices to the common people all over the near east, is to see those parts of our Bible that were written before the exile, not as an exposition of a commonly known and accepted religious tradition, but rather as the work of outstanding minds, who were trying to develop a highly ethical religion, sometimes in stern contrast to the superstitious rites of the land, sometimes gloriously enriched and warmed by them. A history of the prophets from ^{to Jeremiah} ~~Elijah~~ might profitably be written from the point of view of how each man reacted to the popular cult of his time, the points at which he stood most sternly against it and the points at which he adapted it to a nobler conception of religion, for there is no one of those prophets whose work is not fundamentally influenced by the cultic life of his time. It is, therefore, our task in this present chapter to see what influence these Canaanitic cults had on the thought and work of Jeremiah.

2. The Adonis cult -

A. The myth of Adonis and Astarte - Man has always had a need for two things - food and the perpetuation of his race. To coerce the powers into giving him these two fundamental requisites was the purpose of cultic practices which in their essential pattern were the same thruout the near east. Behind these practices lay a myth of a god who died in the decay of vegetation and rose

1. A. Cowley - Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C., p. xix

with the revivification of life upon the earth. This god had associated with him a goddess who was usually both his sister and his wife and who represented the female principle of deity also necessary for the fertility of vegetable and animal life. Both of these characters went under different names in different countries, in Babylonia it was Ishtar and Tammuz, in Egypt Isis and Osiris, in Canaan Astarte and Adonis.

"We first meet with Tammuz in the religious literature of Babylon. He there appears as the youthful spouse or lover of Ishtar, the great mother goddess, the embodiment of the reproductive energies of nature. The references to their connection with each other in myth and ritual are both fragmentary and obscure, but we gather from them that every year Tammuz was believed to die, passing away from the cheerful earth to the gloomy subterranean world, and that every year his divine mistress journeyed in quest of him 'to the land from which there is no returning to the house of darkness, where dust lies on door and bolt.' During her absence the passion of love ceased to operate: men and beasts alike forgot to reproduce their kinds: all life was threatened with extinction. So intimately bound up with the goddess were the sexual functions of the whole animal kingdom that without her presence they could not be discharged. A messenger of the great god Ea was accordingly dispatched to rescue the goddess on whom so much depended. The stern queen of the infernal regions, Allatu or Eresh-Kigal by name, reluctantly allowed Ishtar to be sprinkled with the Water of Life and to depart, in company probably with her lover Tammuz, that the two might return together to the upper world, and that with their return all nature might revive." 1.

The Baalim which make such frequent appearances in the Biblical account are the smaller sectional or tribal deities which were worshipped by the smaller groups. These are the particular form of the great general pattern brought down to serve the smaller units.

"Each tribe had its Baal and Baalat who protected it and whom only its members were permitted to worship. The name of Ba'al 'master' summarizes the conception people had of him. In the first place he was regarded as the sovereign of his votaries, and his position in regard to them was that of an Oriental potentate toward his subjects; they were his servants, or rather his slaves. The Baal was at the same time the 'master' or proprietor of the country in which he resided and which he made fertile by causing springs to

1. J. G. Frazer, Adonis Attis Osiris, pp. 6, 7

gush from its soil. Or his domain was the firmament and he was the dominus caeli, whence he made the waters fall to the roar of tempests. He was always united with a celestial or earthly 'queen' and, in the third place, he was the 'lord' or husband of the 'lady' associated with him. The one represented the male, the other the female principle; they were the authors of all fecundity, and as a consequence the worship of the divine couple often assumed a sensual and voluptuous character." 1.

B. Cultic practices - The events of the myth were regularly celebrated by a ritual pattern.

"Laments for the departed Tammuz are contained in several Babylonian hymns, which liken him to plants that quickly fade. His death appears to have been annually mourned, to the shrill music of flutes, by men and women about the midsummer, in the month named after him, the month of Tammuz. The dirges were seemingly chanted over an effigy of the dead god, which was washed with pure water, anointed with oil, and clad in a red robe, while the fumes of incense rose into the air, as if to stir his dormant senses by their pungent fragrance and wake him from the sleep of death." 2.

In Canaan the public ceremonies were performed on the high places where the male and female principles of deity were represented by trees or standing stones. Here took place the annual enactment of the death and resurrection of the god as portrayed in Frazer's description. We have one of the actual lamentations from Babylon that was used by those who bemoaned the death of the god.

"The lord of destiny(?) lives no more, the lord of destiny(?)
lives no more.
(Tammuz the.....) lives no more, ... lives no more.
The bewailed one(?) lives no more, the lord of destiny(?)
lives no more.
I am queen, my husband lives no more.
Dagalushumgalanna lives no more.
The lord of Arallu lives no more.
The lord of Durgurgurru lives no more.
The shepherd, the lord Tammuz lives no more.
The lord, the shepherd of the folds lives no more.
The consort of the queen of heaven lives no more.
The lord of the folds lives no more.
The brother of the mother of wine lives no more.
(He who creates) the fruit of the land lives no more." 3.

- 1. Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 118
2. J. G. Frazer, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, p. 7
3. George A. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 533

At the high places were also practised various forms of sacred prostitution, on the theory that the men and women involved in this activity represented the gods and were thus enacting the sacred marriage necessary to insure the fertility of nature. In some places all women were required at some time of their lives to yield themselves up for this purpose at the sanctuary. In other places it was customary for there to be a resident group of women in the service of Astarte, the mother-goddess. In excavations of high places there have been found buildings which may have been the homes of these women. The principle behind the repulsive practice may have been a purely logical religious one at the beginning, but the practice tended to degenerate into an immoral orgy.

There was connected with the fertility cult a whole system of sacrifices. By giving to the god by burning at the high place certain grain and animal offerings they hoped to gain his good will and his desired blessing of fertility. They also made oblations of wine and olive oil, probably pouring the liquids right over the standing stones or into some of the numerous cup-holes that we find everywhere in connection with high places. Incense was also offered for the pleasure of the god in the public sanctuaries. We have found evidence in the discovery of the perfume altar at Taanach that the burning of incense to the god was also carried on in the private homes. Excavations have further brought to light numerous plaques of Astarte, which probably hung on the walls of the homes and were the center of the household religion, all working toward the same goal of fertility.

"-----we may conclude that a great Mother Goddess, the personification of all the reproductive energies of nature, was worshipped under different names but with a substantial similarity of myth and ritual by many peoples of western Asia; that associated with

her was a lover, or rather series of lovers, divine yet mortal, with whom she mated year by year, their commerce being deemed essential to the propagation of animals and plants, each in their several kind; and further, that the fabulous union of the divine pair was simulated, and as it were, multiplied on earth by the real, the temporary union of the human sexes at the sanctuary of the goddess for the sake of thereby ensuring the fruitfulness of the ground and the increase of man and beast." 1.

C. Moloch, the king-god -

"As a second blemish, the Semitic religions practised human immolations longer than any other religion, sacrificing children and grown men in order to please sanguinary gods. In spite of Hadrian's prohibition of those murderous offerings, they were maintained in certain clandestine rites and in the lowest practices of magic, up to the fall of idols, and even later. They corresponded to the ideas of a period during which the life of a captive or slave had no greater value than that of an animal." 2.

The worship of Moloch, the king-god was closely connected with that of Adonis, with whom Moloch is often identified. At Carthage and at Tyre we have the custom of burning the chief god. This seems a strange custom, but is explainable on the theory that fire purifies by burning away the fleshly and freeing the spiritual elements.

"Thus it appears that a custom of burning a god in effigy or in the person of a human representative was practised by at least two peoples of western Asia, the Phoenicians and the Hittites. Whether they both developed the custom independently or whether one of them adopted it from the other, we cannot say. And their reasons for celebrating a rite which seems to us strange and monstrous are also obscure. In the preceding inquiry some grounds have been adduced for thinking that the practice was based on a conception of the purifying virtue of fire, which, by destroying the corruptible and perishable elements of man, was supposed to fit him for union with the imperishable and the divine." 3.

As the king was the representative of the god either he or his son was in the earlier stages of the religion thus burned. Later the harshness of this was reduced so that the victim either substituted complete burning by walking across coals, or was burned in effigy or -----

1. J. G. Frazer, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, pp. 23, 24

2. Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 119

3. J. G. Frazer, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, p. 100

had his place taken by some animal. The practices carried on in the Valley of Hinnom at the time of Jeremiah probably have some such background of the actual burning of the god for the purpose of liberating the spirit, but I think they also had in them as Jeremiah suggests the idea of a sacrifice for coercing the god, which should be even greater than the customary animal sacrifices.

3. The Healer-god - The many different functions of deity often represented by a great plurality of gods tended to group themselves about the central deity, with the result that it is difficult to distinguish the cultic practices of one god from another. We are able, however, clearly to distinguish a god who goes by the name of Eshmun and is identical with Men or the later Greek Asklepios. Ramsay, speaking of a later period, describes the functions of this god, which are essentially the same for the Jeremianic period.

"An interesting side of this religion was its connection with the healing art. The god was the Physician and the Saviour of his people. He punished their faults and transgressions by inflicting diseases on them; and when they were penitent he taught them how to treat and cure their diseases. Hence we found that a school of medicine grew up around the hieron of Men Karou, and almost everywhere we find dedications to and worship of the god Asklepios." 1.

The symbol of this god was the serpent. We have preserved in Numbers 21:6-9 an interesting tradition which suggests a close connection with this healing god.

"And Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah, and against thee; pray unto Jehovah, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten when he seeth it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it

1. W. M. Ramsay, The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia, p. 104 .

upon the standard; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived." Num.21:6-9

It is the suggestion of Professor Meek of the University of Toronto that one of the tribes of Israel may have had for its tribal god the serpent god. At any rate the tradition of the serpent god was carried thru to a fairly late time, for we read in II Kings 18:4 that King Hezekiah, not more than fifty years before the time of Jeremiah, had destroyed the brazen serpent which was left from the wilderness days because the people were idolatrously burning incense to it. Small bronze serpents found in excavations seem to confirm the idea of a fairly wide-spread cult. At Gezer there was found what the excavators think may have been a serpent pit, where the living symbols of the god were kept.

4. Jeremiah and the Adonis cult -

A. His denunciations of worship at high places - It has often been speculated, and I think there is a fair degree of possibility, that Jeremiah was very well acquainted with the practices carried on at high places, from the fact that his own town of Anathoth may have had an especially famous high place and that his own family may possibly have been officiating priests at this place. It is certain, that whether this is true or not, his early village life would have made him familiar with the cultic practices, often carried on in his time in the name of Yahweh, but basically fertility rites such as I have described above.

His reaction to these high places was a violent antipathy to all that they represented, apparently from the earliest period of his ministry right on thru. He sees that the religion is a false

thing, a turning to gods who have not in them the real source of life that the people are seeking.

"For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." 2:13

There is a clear reflection in 2:27 of the fact that the trees and standing stones stood for the deities, that children born of sacred prostitution were commonly thought of as offspring of the god. In his direct way Jeremiah exposes the ridiculous position of those who claim such ancestry.

"Who say to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth:" 2:27

In the entire third chapter we get a description of the practices on the high places, and Jeremiah says with a nice irony that because they have gone thru all these rites to get the desired fertility from their gods, Yahweh has withheld the necessary fertilizing rains.

"But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith Jehovah. Lift up thine eyes unto the bare heights, and see; where hast thou not been lain with? By the ways hast thou sat for them, as an Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; yet thou hadst a harlot's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed." 3:1b-3

B. His denunciation of the Moloch worship and of sacrifices in general - The Moloch worship had apparently come into Judah during the reign of Manasseh and was firmly established in the Valley of Hinnom, where children were burned to the god. Jeremiah was squarely set against these practices, to him utterly immoral and opposed to the wishes of an ethical God. In three different places he expresses in very definite terms his opposition to this practice. The most striking of these passages is the one in which

he hurls the earthenware bottle into the Valley with the prophecy that because of all the evil which has here been committed the city shall be as irrevocably broken as the pottery vessel was. (chapter 19)

"And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded not, neither came into my mind. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that it shall no more be called Topheth, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but The Valley of Slaughter: for there shall be no place to bury. And the dead bodies of this people shall be food for the birds of the heavens, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall frighten them away." 7:31-33

The worship of Moloch is clearly connected in the mind of Jeremiah with the sacrificial system, and his condemnation of it is on the basis of its being a more degraded form of sacrifice. He ranges himself, however, with his prophetic predecessors in denouncing all sacrifice as a Canaanitic practice, utterly foreign to the wishes of Yahweh.

"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the way I command you, that it may be well with you." 7:21-23

To Jeremiah the worst thing about all these religious practices is that the people unconcernedly combine them with a formal adherence to Yahweh worship. To him this represents an utter lack of integrity, an utter lack of any adequate conception of Yahweh. In his temple address we hear him lashing out at the people because of this easy-going mixed worship, combined as it is with complete laxity of morals.

"Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called

by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations? Is this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, saith Jehovah." 7:9-11

C. His concept of a Living God - We have easily and without consideration taken into our religion and prayer life the expression "the living God." Yet, as with most common phrases, these words once had a significance that was striking and illuminating. The use of this concept by Jeremiah was just such a significant matter. To the common conception of a god whose life was coincident only with the life of vegetation Jeremiah opposes the thought of a living God, always alive, always potent, free of the temporary quality that characterizes vegetation. Jeremiah never says that Yahweh is eternal, but that concept of an unchanging quality is wrapped up in the thought of a living God. I have already quoted 2:13, in which Yahweh is compared to living waters, as opposed to the broken cisterns which represent the other gods. Yahweh is superior to the other gods in supplying the spiritual needs of the people as an ever-flowing living spring is superior to cisterns, utterly dependent upon rainfalls, and leaky cisterns at that, in supplying the physical needs of the people. The idea of Yahweh as ever vital, ever creative, seems to be implied in the figure. Jeremiah, in my opinion, shows something of daring in connecting Yahweh with a spring of living water even in a figure of speech, for our records seem to show that some of the most important sanctuaries to the fertility deities were located at important springs of living water, and the fertility powers of the deity were closely connected with the water. Jeremiah is so confident of his point of view that he is able triumphantly to point



out to the people that they are utterly wrong, that it is his God who is the giver of living water, while the best their gods can do is to give out a failing supply of the stagnant water which has already been sent by Yahweh.

In 4:2, 5:2, 16:14, 15, and 23:7 we have the words probably of a common enough oath, "As Jehovah liveth,". Jeremiah's point here is to emphasize the significance of this oath, probably thoughtlessly used, in the expression of the superiority of Yahweh over the other deities, just because he was a living rather than a dying and rising god, subject to the vagaries of nature. A superiority of the power of the living God to punish is suggested in 22:24 where Jehovah says:

"As I live, saith Jehovah, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence:"

23:36 impresses upon the people the seriousness of the offence of having perverted or taken lightly the words of the living God, an act which the prophet is sure will not be without its consequences.

"The living God," even to us a phrase to inspire awe, must have been to the prophet a tremendous religious conception, forced upon him by his revulsion, by his sense that there was something wrong with a rising-dying god, but remaining a religious value abiding long after the situation which gave it rise had vanished

D. Some other possible adaptations of the Adonis cult into Yahweh religion. - Clearly as Jeremiah saw the distinction between the magical concepts of the fertility religions and the ethical requirements of Yahweh-worship, his genius was such that he, altho not as much as some of his predecessors, was able to use some of the concepts of the despised cults to enrich and vitalize his own religion.

He recognizes fertility as a basic need in the lives of the people, and he gives to Yahweh the functions which had formerly been ascribed to the fertility gods. This looks like part of the natural evolutionary process by which the functions formerly performed by many lesser deities come more and more to be taken over by one central god. To recognize this tendency toward monotheism as an active factor here does not lessen the importance of the prophetic spirits which swung the trend toward Yahweh or ethical monotheism rather than toward some less exalted type.

Thus, in 3:2, which I have quoted above, Jeremiah shows us that it is Yahweh and not the gods of the land who gives the necessary fertilizing rains. Those who worshipped Adonis and Astarte were conscious of an individual relationship to the god; by their worship they came to have a sense of union with the deity in an intimate and personal way. This concept may have had influence on Jeremiah in his own strong sense of individual relationship to God, who was as a burning fire in his bones, with whom he talked and argued in a very intimate fashion. It may have influenced his concept of the time when all men should know God and his will thru their own inner experience.

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." 31:33

5. Jeremiah and the healer-god cult - What I have said above concerning the way in which Jeremiah took certain of the functions of the fertility gods and transferred them to Yahweh, is true to a greater degree of the activities of the healer god. In 3:22 he begs the people to return to God and be healed of their backslidings. There is reference in 8:17 to serpents which Yahweh is to send among



them to bite them, which may well be a reference to the healer-god in his position as the one who also sends diseases to punish people. At any rate it has connection with the wilderness story of the snakes sent as a punishment by Yahweh. 8:22 and 17:14 both express the need for spiritual healing and the hope that Yahweh will be the physician.

"Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" 8:22

"Heal me, O Jehovah, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved." 17:14

The complete picture of a deity who is entirely powerful both to wound and to heal is given in 30:12-17.

"For thus saith Jehovah, Thy hurt is incurable, and thy wound grievous. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not: for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the greatness of thine iniquity, because thy sins were increased. Why criest thou for thy hurt? thy pain is incurable: for the greatness of thine iniquity, because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee. Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that despoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith Jehovah; because they have called thee an outcast, saying, It is Zion, whom no man seeketh after."

Yahweh as healer is a gentle yet strong concept of divinity, an enrichment of religion in the direction of warmer personal experience.

6. Conclusion - Living in a world in which were strong cultic practices, the prophet Jeremiah could not fail to be strongly influenced by them. Our study has shown us that his reaction to the Adonis cult with its worship of the fertility process was almost en-

tirely a negative one - that he utterly denounced the high place practices as opposed to the will of Yahweh. He did, however, develop in contrast to these myths the awesome concept of a living God, and he did contribute to the monotheistic tendency by ascribing to Yahweh the responsibility for fertility and by giving to Him the functions of the healer god.

Chapter III - Israel, the Fallen Northern Kingdom

1. Introduction - In this chapter and the two succeeding ones we are to occupy ourselves with the influence of Israel, Assyria, and Babylon on the Judean life and on the work of Jeremiah. The activities of all these peoples at this particular period of history are closely intertwined with one another not to mention with that of Egypt, in ways that we have not as yet been able entirely to untangle. In so far as it is possible I shall try to take up these peoples separately, an artificial and academic method of procedure, but one that may have some value by giving, thru varying emphases, clarity to a confused period of history.

In this present chapter I am forced to draw heavily upon the work of Adam C. Welch, one of the few men to write at all extensively on my present problem or related ones.

2. Political and social situation - At the time of Jeremiah Israel was no longer a political entity, for in 721 its capital, Samaria, had fallen to Sargon of Assyria, and its population had been carried off and planted in the ^{other} colonies of the empire, while alien peoples had been brought into Israel from other conquered territories. It seems reasonable to suppose, however, that there were more natives in the land than any one other single group.

"Sargon, in his description, describes his treatment of Northern Israel after its conquest: 'I changed the government of the country and set over it a viceroy of my own. The tribute of the former king I imposed upon them.' The great king had sufficient experience to know that a country is only able to pay tribute when there are men to till its fields and when the cultivators know the local conditions." 1.

1. Adam C. Welch, Jeremiah, His Time and His Work, p. 9

From what we know of the numerous regicides which occurred just before the end of the independent existence of Israel, and of the luxurious living of the rich supported by the poor, we may reasonably conclude that the more impersonal government of Assyria may have improved social conditions somewhat in the land, altho politically Israel was now only a province of the Assyrian empire.

"The new situation of Northern Israel could not fail to have an influence on the policy of the court at Jerusalem. The two kingdoms had been rivals during all their separate existence, and their nearness to one another had made their mutual jealousy more intense. But now it was impossible for Israel any longer to stand in rivalry to its sister people. Instead of jealousy came sympathy and the sense of common cause against the heathenism which had destroyed one people and could at any hour destroy the other. The native Israelites were inevitably drawn to seek support from their brethren of the same stock and especially to look for help in maintaining their faith. Judah was equally drawn by sympathy and by ambition, to extend its influence over the North and to make closer the bonds of race and blood." 1.

Judah seems at this time to have been fairly unmolested by Assyria, so long as she paid her tribute faithfully. Consequently the Judeans were ambitious to extend their territory until it included again all that had been in David's kingdom. Welch says that it was because Judah was succeeding only too well in this purpose that King Josiah was killed at Megiddo.

"In the great stakes for which Egypt was playing it made little difference tho the city of Jerusalem had fallen away from Nineveh. Some larger cause is needed to explain Necho's action. And that can be found in Josiah's effort, and successful effort, to exercise control over Northern Israel. By the action on his part he had made himself master of all the hill country of Ephraim. Now a power which held the heights above Esdraelon and above the coast road was a dangerous enemy to an army which, in the event of defeat before the Babylonians, must stream home to Egypt along that route. Whether there was a battle at Megiddo or merely a military execution, the Egyptian was making sure of his line of retreat before advancing to Carchemish and to the fight for the mastery of Syria which must take place there. And he needed to make sure of his line of retreat, because Josiah had a dangerous hold on Northern Israel." 2.

1. Adam C. Welch, Jeremiah, His Time and His Work, p. 12

2. Ibid p. 21

3. Religious situation. - Before the fall of Samaria official religious practices of Israel had been centered at the two sanctuaries of Dan and Bethel, with Bethel probably being the more important and authoritative of the two. With the coming of the Assyrians an official Assyrian worship was imposed upon the people, altho it did not become an important factor in their lives. The various alien groups which came into the country brought with them their local cults, and we may be certain that fertility rites of the sort described in the previous chapter were prominent. There came a time when things did not prosper as they should have done, and the inhabitants of the land decided that the difficulty had arisen because the proper rites of the god of the land were not being carried out.

"Not only did the backbone of the population consist of the the old Israelite farmers and crafters, but the men were at a later date permitted to renew the practice of their cult. The province became infested with wild beasts. Troubled by the plague, the newcomers concluded that the creatures were sent by the numen loci, who was angry because he did not receive his customary offerings of sacrifices and firstfruits. Ignorant themselves of the right means to propitiate Yahweh, they petitioned that a priest be sent them from among the exiles, who might continue in the country the correct ritual of the god of the land. Their request was found reasonable, and a priest was sent who settled at Bethel." 1.

This worship at Bethel went along quite peaceably until the time of the Deuteronomic reform, when Josiah in his ruthless iconoclasm destroyed Bethel as well as the other high places thruout the country.

"Moreover the altar that was at Beth-el, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he brake down; and he burned the high place and beat it to dust, and burned the Asherah." I Kings 23:15.

1. Adam C. Welch, Jeremiah, His Time and His Work, p.9

Altho this action of King Josiah in destroying Bethel may have put an end to all separate official religion in Israel, it probably disturbed the local cultic practices thruout the province very little. Our study of Canaanitic fertility cults would lead us to believe that the basic religious beliefs and practices of the people of the land underwent very little change no matter what the official religion might be.

4. Literary Influence - At the time the northern kingdom fell it was possessed of a considerable body of religious and national literature. It is Welch's suggestion that this material would have been taken to Judah for safe keeping and that the best place to keep things safe would have been in the temple at Jerusalem.

Among the literary documents which were extant in the northern kingdom there were at least three of which we can be sure. The interpretation of the early traditions of the people, written by a prophetic hand in about the ninth century, which scholars have designated the E document was probably the most important of these writings. Then there were books of more recent history, which have become part of our Books of Kings. There were also certainly some prophetic writings, surely the Book of Hosea, and Welch thinks also Amos. It is argued that Amos would not be preserved by the northern kingdom because he was from the south, and his indictment of the northern kingdom had been severe, but it would also seem that since the work of Amos directly concerned the north, was scarcely more stern in denunciations than that of Hosea, and since the literary and prophetic center seems to have been the northern kingdom, his work may possibly

have been part of their literature. Who is to decide this case I do not know. Welch also thinks that there was among this literature a collection of psalms or rituals used at the public worship of Israel; among these psalms he places parts of our Psalms 80 and 81. Peters thinks that Psalms 42, 43, were part of this collection. Again I can only say that this is perfectly possible but that no one can say about it with any degree of positiveness. From this northern kingdom, before its fall, a greater cultural and literary center than its southern neighbor, came a considerable number of valuable religious documents. We can be fairly certain of the E history, of parts of the Books of Kings and of the prophecies of Hosea, but whether Amos and certain psalms also formed part of this literature is open to question. Moreover it seems highly probable to me that some other writings forming part of the northern literature have been permanently lost.

The southern kingdom did not keep the literature of Israel intact in the form in which it came to them. With the purpose in mind of uniting the interests of the two groups so that political amalgamation might be possible, the scholars of Judah combined Israelitic literature with their own, as well as adapting it to fit better their own ideas about things. The best example of the combination of northern and southern literature is the putting together of the J and E traditions, which Welch says must have taken place in the century between the fall of Samaria and the death of Josiah. He points out that whoever combined these two documents was no inconsiderable artist, for the seams are so well made that the very most careful scholarship is unable to detect all of them. The

Books of Kings were also edited, apparently after the Deuteronomic reform, for the kings are all judged as to whether they did or did not help the centralization of worship. These redactions brought the literature of Israel into the permanent religious heritage of Judaism and eventually of Christianity.

Welch has a theory that the present Book of Deuteronomy, generally accepted by scholars as the book which was found in the temple and formed the basis of Josiah's reforms, was originally a law book of one of the northern sanctuaries, probably Bethel. This is an interesting and not impossible theory, and Welch goes to considerable pains to support it, but the fact that so much effort is necessary to sustain this theory makes it seem unconvincing to me. The weight of scholarship considers Deuteronomy as indigenous to Judah, probably written by the prophetic party during the reign of Manasseh. Since scholars do hold such an opinion, since my own knowledge of Deuteronomy is not sufficient to form an independent judgment, and since I am left unconvinced by the theorizing of Welch, I shall leave the discussion of the influence of Deuteronomy on Judah out of the present chapter as being irrelevant to a discussion of the contribution of the northern kingdom.

5. Relation to Jeremiah -

A. Jeremiah as a northerner - It is frequently pointed out that Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, is located in the territory of Benjamin, that the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin, both Rachel tribes, were so closely related that Jeremiah would feel himself probably more of an Israelite than a Judean. Before accepting such a point of view I think it is well to note that the territory in



which Anathoth was located had been part of the southern kingdom from the time of the division, and that since there was considerable divergence of development as well as actual antagonism between the two kingdoms, the inhabitants of this part of the country would have had quite a different point of view from those of the northern kingdom. It is also to be observed that Jeremiah was born at least seventy-five years after Israel had ended its political existence; the unification efforts of Judah had been going on for some little time. It is not, therefore, at all likely that Jeremiah would have thought of Israel as distinct or superior to Judah in a patriotic manner. The very nearness of Anathoth to Jerusalem would have made it the most normal thing in the world that the dwellers of that suburban village should turn to the capital city as the center of their commercial, political, and religious life. I do not think, therefore, that Jeremiah had an interest in Israel other than that of a Judean of his time and a prophet of Yahweh. I do not think that a consideration of his writings will show any more intimate connection with the northern kingdom than I have indicated.

B. A consideration of certain "Israel passages" - It seems to me that undue importance has been laid, especially by Welch, on the fact that the words "Israel", "Ephraim", and "Jacob" appear quite frequently in the Book of Jeremiah. There are, it is true, certain passages in which a distinction is made between the fates of the two separate groups. For the most part it seems true that Jeremiah is using the terms "Israel" and "Judah" without making any fine distinction between them, but rather in poetic parallelism.

"Declare ye this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah." 5:20

This verse seems to mean no more than if an emphatic public speaker in our day should say, "Declare this in New York, and publish it in San Fransisco." Thruout the book I feel that references to the two parts of the country are made as to sections of a single unity, and that the prophet shows very little if any more interest in one than in the other.

One of the places in which Jeremiah does make a distinction between the two kingdoms, the one ruined, the other still standing but destined for ruin, is in his temple address.

"But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith Jehovah, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore will I do unto the house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim." 7:12-15

Another passage in which the two kingdoms stand in opposition to each other is in the third chapter, in which the prophet points out to Judah that with the horrible example of Israel's fall before them they still persist in their idolatry, and, therefore, are more to be condemned than Israel which had not such an example.

"And Jehovah said unto me, Backsliding Israel hath showed herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith Jehovah; I will not look in anger upon you; for I am merciful, saith Jehovah, I will not keep anger for ever." 3:11, 12

In his chapter of glorious hope for the future Jeremiah makes it clear that the exiles of Israel as well as those of Judah are to return and to share in the new covenant.

"Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." 31:31

A consideration of these passages makes it clear that Jeremiah was fully cognizant of the situation of Israel and was interested in her return, not I think as a son who has lost his mother country, but rather as a sensitive prophet who looks forward to a glorious religious future for a united people.

C. Influence of northern literature, especially of Hosea.

"It is impossible to discover what writings, if any, may have been at hand for Jeremiah to consult. Of the writings extant in his day some were later incorporated in the Bible books, while many others, and perhaps the larger part of them, have disappeared. It is doubtful whether Jeremiah, either in his youth or in his maturity, regarded any of these writings as having that sacred character which is today associated with the Bible. At that time the movement had barely begun which tended to regard any writing as having sanctity in itself. God was still recognized as a living God, speaking thru the living voice of his prophets, rather than as a God who had enshrined his will once for all in a fixed and changeless book." 1.

Jeremiah was certainly acquainted with the literature pertaining to the early traditional history of his nation, and he knew possibly also some of the psalm literature which came from the northern kingdom. Without doubt, however, the greatest single literary influence on Jeremiah was Hosea's writings, and it is also true that Jeremiah found himself more in sympathy with the spirit of Hosea than of that of any of the other prophets.

"As the Kingdom of Israel on its downfall bore in Hosea its noblest prophetic fruit, so in the time immediately preceding the destruction of Judah we find the sublime figure of Jeremiah. Mentally, also, these two men were closely related. Sentiment is the predominant characteristic of each. Both have the same tender and sympathetic heart; both have the same elegiac bent of mind; both were pre-eminently devout men. The religious element preponderates

1. Lindsay B. Longacre, A Prophet of the Spirit, p. 30

entirely over the ethical. It can be proved that Jeremiah was powerfully influenced by Hosea, and that he looked upon him as his prototype." 1.

We see him using Hosea's figures of speech to express the relationship between Yahweh and His people, especially in the earlier part of his ministry.

"And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in justice, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know Jehovah." Hosea 2:19, 20

"Return, O backsliding children, saith Jehovah; for I am a husband unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Jeremiah 3:14,15

It is not only in such tangible matters as similar figures of speech, of which the one given above is merely a sample, but also in general religious conceptions that Jeremiah bears a striking similarity to Hosea. Both men think of Yahweh as one who suffers because His people have deserted Him; both think of religion as a spirit which penetrates beyond the ethical, in which the supreme sin is lack of love or gratitude to Yahweh who gives all and loves His people.

"To him and to Hosea apostasy was the root from which every other evil grew. They could not say with Amos, 'for three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not turn doom away' (2:6), and then proceed to a list of the special sins which were bringing down the divine wrath. Amos saw Yahweh stand with His plummet beside the wall His people had built, and test their building by a standard which came ab extra. The sins, too, which he condemned were anti-social, and therefore could be catalogued, tested, condemned. Hosea and Jeremiah saw one sin, the fruitful mother of many: the people knew not Yahweh, they had forsaken Yahweh." 2.

D. Northern influence on Jeremiah's imagery - The fall of Samaria had, as stated above, occurred about seventy-five years

1. Carl Heinrich Cornill, The Prophets of Israel, pp. 91,92

2. Adam C. Welch, Jeremiah, His Time and His Work, p. 185

before the birth of Jeremiah, and it is therefore unlikely that he should even have known anyone who had lived thru that period. Yet I venture to suggest that there probably were current in Jeremiah's time some fairly vivid and gruesome tales about the things that happened during the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom. Perhaps some of these may even have been in written form. It is also likely that Jeremiah may have at some time or other taken a trip thru the northern territory and seen some of the ravages of the invasion and been impressed just as modern visitors to France are by the horror of the event which caused such ruins. The combination of any such visits and knowledge of stories existing, with a vivid and sensitive imagination seems to me a likely source for the striking descriptions we have of the destruction which Jeremiah says is coming to Judah. Such passages are numerous thruout the book, but I shall merely quote one here as an example:

"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was waste and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved to and fro. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful field was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of Jehovah, and before his fierce anger."4:23-26

6. Conclusion - At the time of Jeremiah Israel was a province of Assyria over which Judah was coming to assume more and more control. As a political and religious factor Jeremiah was aware of this northern state in the life of his times, and we can easily trace this awareness in his book. I do not think, however, that there is adequate justification for the theory that Jeremiah was any more influenced by the northern kingdom and its recent catastrophe than would have been the case with any ordinary southern individual with prophetic insight.

Chapter IV. - The Crumbling Assyrian Empire

1. Introduction - To find the deep-lying roots of the final disintegration of Assyria, which occurred in the time of Jeremiah, is not my purpose here. I am proposing rather to deal with the factors that have importance in the rather narrow period of time between the years 625 B.C. and 604 B.C., limiting this even further by omitting factors that have little connection with the fate of Judah. I trust that by this necessary limitation I shall not be giving the false impression that the fall of Assyria was a sudden and unexpected crash of a strong power, rather than a process of gradual and long drawn out decay.

Judah's relation to Assyria was that of a tributary state, nominally independent, but owing to Assyria tribute and homage. There was, probably from the time of Sennacherib on, a compact of some sort between Judah and Assyria, which bound the former to certain very definite obligations. We know that, besides the tribute, this included the official worship of certain Assyrian deities.

2. Judah's gesture of freedom

A. Death of Asshurbanipal and freedom of Babylon - At just about the time when Jeremiah received his call to be a prophet, Asshurbanipal, the last great king of Assyria, died, and from then on the decay of the great empire was much accelerated.

The immediate result of this increased weakness of Assyria was that Babylon, the destined successor of Assyria as mistress of the world, was given a position of greater independence than she had as yet had under Assyria.

"In 625 B.C. the successor of Asshurbanipal upon the tottering throne of Assyria had found himself compelled to acknowledge Nabopolassar the Chaldean as nominally viceroy, but virtually king, of Babylon. The able chief of a vigorous race, Nabopolassar bided his time for a vaster sovereignty, and steadily this came to him." 1.

B. Deuteronomy in its political significance - Judah was not slow to recognize the weakness of the Assyrian empire and to make a very significant gesture of political independence. We have been prone to take the Hebrew scriptures at their word and believe that the Deuteronomic reform as carried out by King Josiah was merely a local religious matter. Perhaps a good many of the Judeans of the time when the reform took place may have looked on the matter in the same way. A more sweeping view of the situation makes it perfectly clear that here is no mere sudden religious reform, but a rather well calculated political move, whose purpose was to show that Judah was no longer dependent upon the Mesopotamian empire.

"It is natural to find that the reign of Josiah saw a complete change in the political attitude of Judah, and equally natural that in the Hebrew records this appears as a religious movement for reform. The reform is described in II Kings 22 and 23, and when its terms are examined it becomes clear that it ran along two main lines. Josiah carried out a thorough purification of temple and city, destroying every emblem of the foreign cults and especially of the Assyrian cult. The leaders of the nation reversed the religious policy of Manasseh and decreed that Yahweh alone was to be acknowledged at the national shrine. But the act involved more than religion: it was tantamount to a repudiation of Assyria and a declaration of Judah's independence. As such, it was made possible thru the weakness of the Empire. Nineveh had already begun its final struggle with its rivals in the East. Babylon with the help of the Medes, was pressing it hard in the Tigris Valley. It could only maintain itself at home by help from distant Egypt and by the dubious aid of the Scythians: but it was powerless to maintain its authority in Syria." 2.

1. George Adam Smith, Jeremiah, p. 175

2. Adam C. Welch, Jeremiah, his Time and His Work, pp. 16, 17

"As in the case of Hezekiah, we shall probably do Josiah no injustice if we recognize that this widespread reform had a political aspect. It is true that there was no longer any possibility of the interference of Assyria, but Josiah might have been very reluctant to carry out the provisions of Deuteronomy if Assyria had still been in a position to take vengeance on him. His action, whatever else it may have meant to the political world of his day, was certainly a gesture of independence, and it was so far successful that no untoward consequences followed immediately, and he retained his throne for thirteen years longer. But he had clearly proclaimed, especially by his treatment of Bethel, to his own people and to all others whom it might concern, that henceforward Judah stood alone, and owed allegiance to no foreign power." 1.

C. Jeremiah's relation to Deuteronomy - As I have indicated in my first chapter the passages relating to Jeremiah's connection with the Deuteronomic code are among those about which there is most doubt of their authenticity. The position that I have taken in regard to Jeremiah's itinerant mission for the purpose of installing the new code thruout the land, as recorded in the eleventh chapter, is that there is an authentic kernel to the tradition, that the test of consistency between Jeremiah's spirit and that of Deuteronomy is not one which is at all conclusive in my thinking. I believe that religiously Jeremiah may have seen the values of Deuteronomy to the extent that he might be blinded temporarily to the fact that religion by law is a contradiction in terms, but it is somewhat more difficult for me to accept the fact that Jeremiah would endorse Deuteronomy if he understood the political implications which it had. We are not certain what the contract arrangements between Judah and Assyria were at this time; we cannot be sure whether this move on the part of Judah constituted a violation of treaty or not, but even if Jeremiah could not criticise his people on the grounds of lack of integrity, he should have seen that no good could

1. Theodore H. Robinson, A History of Israel, Vol. I, pp. 423, 424

come to his nation, lying as she did between the allied powers of Egypt and Assyria, by flaunting her independence in this fashion. It must have been that Jeremiah felt that the immediate benefits to be secured from a purification of the national cult would outweigh the political disadvantages which would seem to us to accrue to such a rash move. It is certain that with our imperfect knowledge of the situation and of Jeremiah's attitude toward it we cannot pass judgment either on the merits of the reform itself or on the motives which induced Jeremiah to take the stand toward Deuteronomy which he did.

3. The barbaric invasions

"A new factor had appeared in the political and national life of western Asia. From time immemorial the north and north-east had always been a home of mystery and of peril for the people of the Fertile Crescent. There dwelt, on the great plains of what is now Russia and on the high lands of central Asia, groups of wandering nomads, of different races, but similar in culture. From time to time economic or other pressure had led hordes of them to break thru into the more fertile countries of the south, where some of them were content to plunder and return to their homes, while others made settlements on the land they won. These sudden irruptions have not often effected a permanent change in the population of the southern territories, tho once or twice they have assumed the proportions of great racial migrations. Thence came, apparently, the Indo-Aryan peoples who settled in Persia and India on the one hand, and in the lands to the north of the Mediterranean on the other. Thence came the movements of the Germanic tribes, and later of the Goths and the Huns." 1.

The three groups which came into the more highly 'civilized world at this time were the Medes, the Scythians, and the Cimmerians. All three had their part to play in breaking down the Assyrian empire, but it is to the Scythians that we shall largely devote our present discussion.

1. Theodore H. Robinson, A History of Israel, Vol. I, pp. 412, 413

A. Their effect on Assyria

"Part of the troubles which arose in the Euphrates Valley may be traced also to the apparent success of Assyria. On its northeastern frontier the Empire had finally broken. Urartu or Armenia, which had long been a thorn in its side. Yet, while Urartu had often seriously annoyed its southern neighbors, it had also formed a buffer between the Mesopotamian plains and the wild tribes on the north. Its disappearance left that frontier open, and the Scythians swarmed in by the route of the Caucasus. And tho the tribes soon became allies of the Empire, it was significant that the danger arising from their invasion was averted, not by their conquest, but by admitting them to alliance. Nineveh was only too glad to secure their support, and did not consider that a loyalty which was based on advantage was only likely to endure until someone else offered better terms for disloyalty. The power which might offer such terms was already rising. The Medes had thrown off the Assyrian yoke and succeeded in maintaining their independence. In Babylonia a movement was on foot which was to result in the rise of the Neo-Chaldean Empire. Assyria could only make head against its enemies by the uncertain support of Scythia and Egypt." 1.

When the Scythians did turn from being allies of Assyria to being her enemies they succeeded in their combination with the Medes and Chaldeans in destroying Nineveh in 612 B. C., an event signalized in the Book of Nahum but utterly ignored by Jeremiah.

"Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles are at rest; thy people are scattered upon the mountains, and there is none to gather them. There is no assuaging of thy hurt; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"
Nahum 3:18,19

The fall of Nineveh was the actual end of the Assyrian empire, altho they did establish themselves at the ancient city of ~~Harra~~ ^{Harran} for a few years.

B. Their effect on Judah - Herodotus tells us that the Scythians steadily gained in power until they became the masters of Asia. The picture which he gives of their rule is probably exaggerated but there is no doubt enough of truth behind the statement to make it of some value.

1. Adam C. Welch, Jeremiah, His Time and His Work, pp. 14, 15

"The dominion of the Scythians over Asia lasted eight-and-twenty years, during which time their insolence and oppression spread ruin on every side. For besides the regular tribute, they exacted from the several nations additional imposts, which they fixed at pleasure; and further, they scoured the country and plundered every one of whatever they could. At length Cyaxeres and the Medes invited the greater part of them to a banquet, and made them drunk with wine, after which they were all massacred." 1.

To the hearts of the people of Judah these men of strange race and language struck terror. They were in fear of what they might do to their countrysides. We are not certain how far these hordes penetrated into the land of Judah or how much ravage they committed. If we may believe the record of Herodotus at this point they had just reached Palestine when they were met and driven back by the Egyptians. There are those who doubt the importance or imminence of the Scythians at this time, but it seems consistent with what we know of history that there should have been such a barbaric intrusion into the civilized world, and the account of Herodotus of this invasion does not seem grossly exaggerated.

"The Scythians having thus invaded Media, were opposed by the Medes, who gave them battle, but, being defeated, lost their empire. The Scythians became masters of Asia.

After this they marched forward with the design of invading Egypt. When they had reached Palestine, however, Psammetichus and the Egyptian king met them with gifts and prayers, and prevailed on them to advance no further." 2.

The people of Judah escaped in large measure, then, the ravages of these barbaric invaders; at least there never seems to have been much danger to their capital city, but the threat from the north inspired some very vivid prophetic words, the entire small book of Zephaniah and a few chapters in Jeremiah.

1. The History of Herodotus, edited by George Rawlinson, Vol. I, pp.191,192

2. ibid, pp. 190,191

"It was during the reign of Josiah, roughly about 626 B.C., that they (the Scythians) appeared in Palestine. Two prophets, Zephaniah and Jeremiah, testify to their presence and to the terror which they inspired. Both seem to have owed their initial prophetic call to the invasion, and the former saw in it an apocalyptic significance. The latter vividly describes their march, and the impression they made on the inhabitants of Judah, their strange language, their swift horses - all seem to be mounted - their fierce aspect, their cruel behaviour, their inability to carry out a successful siege. They did, it is true, take Ashkelon, but its fall was due to treachery within the walls, and there is no record of their capturing any other fortified place. Herodotus tells his readers that Psammetichus staved off an invasion of Egypt only by giving the enemy large bribes." 1.

C. Reflections in Jeremiah - A fairly general consensus of scholarship gives to Jeremiah 4:5-6:29 the title of "Scythian Poems." Those who argue that all methods of warfare to which allusion is made in these chapters are not pertinent to the Scythians are satisfactorily answered by that eminently sane scholar, George Adam Smith.

"The invasion of Western Asia by the Scythians happened some time between 627 and 620 B.C. The following series of brief poems (4:5-6:29) unfold the panic actually caused, or to the prophet's imagination likely to be caused, in Judah by the advance of these marauding hordes, and clearly reflect their appearance and manner of raiding. It is indeed doubtful that Judah was visited by the Scythians, who appear to have swept only the maritime plain of Palestine. And once more we must remember that when the Prophet dictated his early Oracles to Baruch for the second time in 604, and added to them many more like words, the impending enemy from the North was no longer the Scythians but Nebuchadrezzar and his Chaldeans; for this will explain the features of the poems that are not suited to the Scythians and their peculiar warfare, which avoided the siege of fortified towns but kept to the open country and the ruin of its villages and fields. Jeremiah does not give the feared invaders a name. The Scythians were utterly new to his world; yet their name may have occurred in the poems as originally delivered and have been removed in 604, when the Scythians were no longer a force to be reckoned with." 2.

From a literary point of view these Scythian songs are among the most powerful of the prophet's work. There is scarcely a bit of them that is not alive with deep poetic feeling. It is hard to choose from

- 1. Theodore H. Robinson, A History of Israel, Vol I, pp. 413, 414
2. George Adam Smith, Jeremiah, Pp. 110, 111

among these for a sample quotation, but one of the best portions is the prophet's description of the utter desolation that is to come upon the land.

"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was waste and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved to and fro. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful field was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of Jehovah, and before his fierce anger." Jeremiah, 4:23-26

These prophecies give us the ethical point of view, that Jehovah is bringing this foe from the north upon them because they have sinned and turned away from His will. This emphasis is no new one in Jeremiah, but it is a regular part of the prophetic tradition, from Amos on, that God is in control of history, and that He uses the movements of history, in the phraseology of the prayer book, "to the maintenance of righteousness, and to the hindrance and punishment of wickedness." Certainly this concept of an ethical deity requiring ethical lives of his worshippers and sure to punish if this is not the case is the greatest single contribution of the prophetic movement, and it is a typical note of Jeremiah from these early Scythian songs on to the end.

These Scythian songs form a part of the apocalyptic tradition, which particularly in the later prophets came to be of such great importance. Jeremiah is certainly familiar with the concept of a coming world catastrophe, of a day of Jehovah. I can see no reason, however, for imputing to his words a great deal of apocalyptic significance. Yet we must take account of the fact that a foe from the north was a regular part of the apocalyptic tradition, as well as being a rather constant factor in actual history, and it is ever hard

to determine what a given person means in a given place when speaking of this foe.

In these Scythian poems are also included several glimpses into the heart of the prophet, showing that even at this early period of his ministry his grief for his people was deep and genuine, that he shrank from bringing to them the message of doom that he must speak. It is of note that Jeremiah transfers this feeling of intense anguish from his heart to that of Jehovah. If he, a mere man, feels thus about the fate of his people, how must God, who cared much more deeply, be affected?

"My anguish, my anguish! I am pained at my very heart; my heart is disquieted in me; I cannot hold my peace: because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is laid waste: suddenly are my tents destroyed, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? For my people are foolish, they know me not; they are sottish children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Jeremiah, 4:19-22

It is certain that the doom that Jeremiah seems to think is coming from the Scythians did not strike the people in the terrible fashion in which he portrayed it.

"....it is certain that Jeremiah was left in the end with a considerable margin of unfulfilled prediction on his hands. The crisis passed - how long it lasted we do not know - the nation survived, and years of peace and comparative security followed." 1.

What reaction the failure of this early prophecy may have produced in the young man it is not possible to say with certainty, but the normal human response would surely have been a sense of failure, perhaps a struggle to regain a sense of God's power in him. Whatever struggles he may have had, he eventually came to the place

1. John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, p.45

where he saw that a temporary situation which he had wrongly diagnosed had produced from him words of prophecy that were more lasting than the situation which had produced them, and which he had saved by having them committed to writing.

4. Egyptian interference

A. Their aims and practices - There is hardly a period in Israelitish history in which Egypt is not somehow mixed up in the political situation. Never in these times was she strong enough in a military way to be really formidable, especially since her position so far from the other parts of the near east made campaigns difficult and necessarily short, since much time of the season of the year allotted to campaigns had to be spent in travelling to and from the scenes of conflict. In spite of her military weakness Egypt was always ambitious for a wider sphere of influence, for more power, and to this end she maintained many representatives at the various courts of the near east.

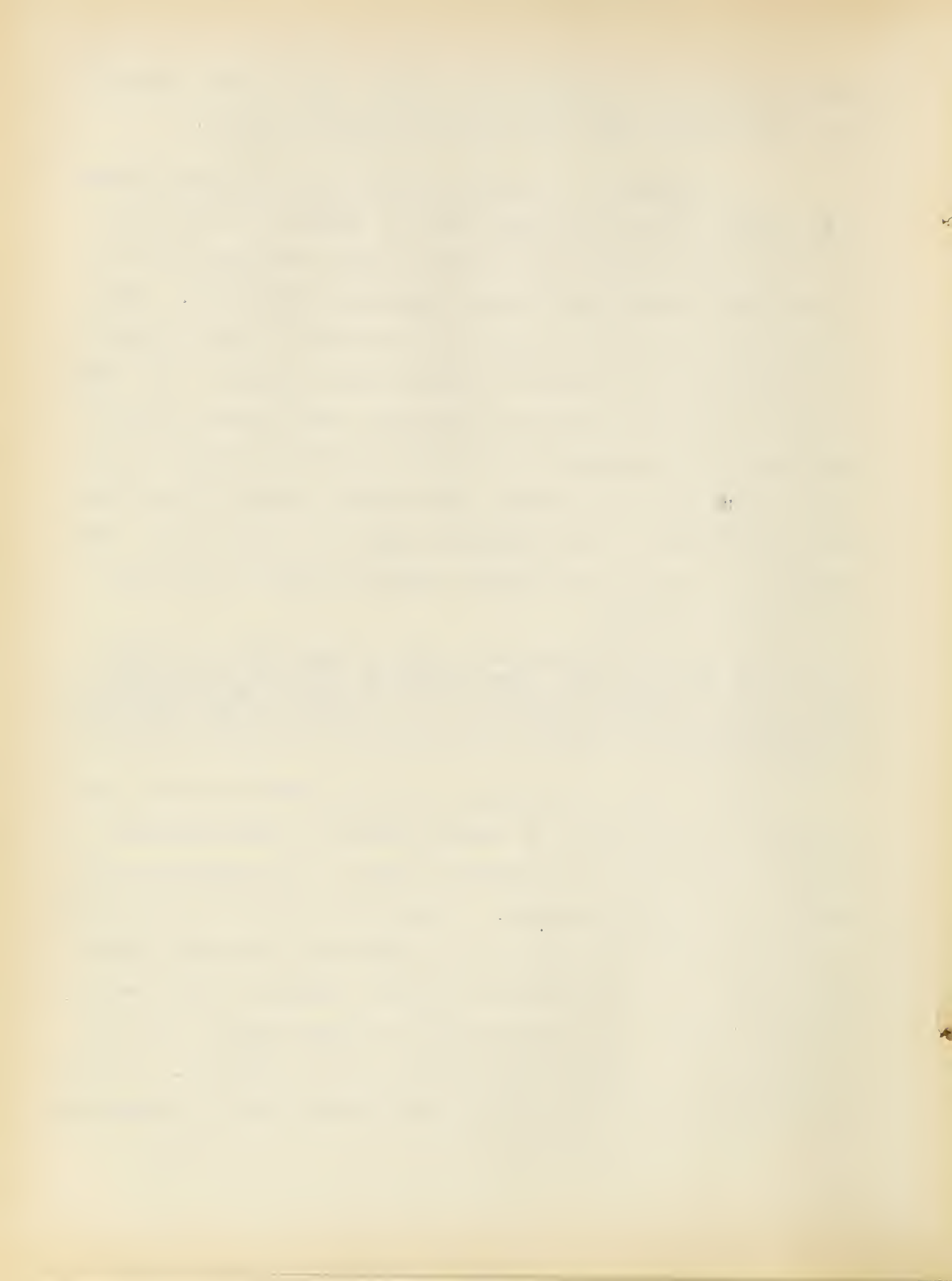
At the period with which we are dealing Egypt was an ally of Assyria and made regular yearly campaigns into the north to support Assyria in her campaigns against the neighbors, who gradually became stronger and stronger. Egypt's purpose in all this was probably to support a weak power rather than to allow some of the more vigorous young nations to come up and usurp the leadership of the eastern world to the hurt of Egypt. The alliance between Egypt and Assyria can be based only on its possibilities of giving to each the things she most desired. The relations between the two nations at this period have been a puzzle to historians, many of whom have taken these two nations to be in rivalry for the mastery of the world, but a

Careful student of the period like Robinson takes rather the stand that I have stated above, that these nations were allied.

B. Megiddo - In one of his northern campaigns Pharaoh Necho of Egypt encountered King Josiah at Megiddo and killed him, probably in the year 608. The purpose of this engagement and the lineup of the adversaries have been variously represented. There are those who see in this a major world conflict in which Assyria was deposed from her position and Egypt became supreme. This view has come to be rather generally abandoned, mostly because records discovered in the archives of the ancient nations involved do not bear out this view of the matter, altho modern scholars are not sure what interpretation of the situation ought to be substituted. The problem is to settle upon Josiah's reason for going up there and what actually happened.

"In his days Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and Pharaoh-necho slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre." II Kings 23:29-30a

Here it looks as tho Egypt and Assyria were at enmity, but a different interpretation or transliteration of the preposition "against" might change this meaning as well as the statement that Josiah went up against Pharaoh. It does not look as tho there were an armed conflict, but rather as tho Josiah were privately killed, and the reason for this killing is obscure, unless it might be the one Welch suggests, that Josiah would be strong enough to cut off the retreat of the Egyptian army should such be necessary. I think that so far as world history is concerned Megiddo was an unimportant



enough affair but as to the reasons impelling Josiah to go to Megiddo and Necho to kill him, I do not feel that there is enough evidence to decide what they may be.

The results of Megiddo on Judah are much clearer than its antecedents. The first of these is an increased political influence of Egypt over Judah, perhaps the greatest amount of influence any foreign power had had ^{over it} since its inception. We read that Necho dethroned the king the Israelites had chosen and made the elder brother ruler in his place at the same time that he placed a tribute on the land.

"And Pharaoh-necoh put him in bonds at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of a hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. And Pharaoh-necoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim; but he took Jehoahaz away; and he came to Egypt, and died there. And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh-necoh." II Kings 23:33-35.

This foreign domination resulted in a breakdown of the prized Jewish democracy.

"In place of Jehoahaz, Necho enthroned his elder brother, whose name was Eliakim. Perhaps as a concession to Israelite feeling he changed his name to Jehoiakim, substituting for the more general divine term in his name that of the national God. From the first, therefore, the new king was a vassal of Egypt, and he represented an Egyptian policy thruout. He formed a strong contrast to his father in almost every way, except that both seem to have been men of strong character and of determination. The circumstances of his accession placed him in a peculiar position, for he was the first of the kings of Judah of whom we know that he was appointed as the nominee of a foreign overlord. It seems clear, too, that his appointment being made by force of arms, did not necessitate any kind of royal covenant with the people and left him free to play the tyrant as he would. The constitutional monarchy, so dear to the Israelite heart, had broken down, and in Jehoiakim Judah had a king who was

prepared to take full advantage of his position." 1.

The political situation was responsible in large measure for the discouragement and feeling of defeat that possessed the people. The Deuteronomic reform had roused high hopes of political independence and national prosperity, which were now utterly dashed.

"A disastrous engagement took place at Megiddo, where Josiah was completely defeated and mortally wounded. This was for the religious party in Israel a terrible blow. Josiah, the first king pleasing to God, had met a dreadful end. He had served God faithfully and honestly, and now God had abandoned him. Could not some mistake have been made as to God's power, or as to His justice? And indeed after this event a change does really seem to have taken place in the religious view." 2.

Of the activities of Jeremiah during this period we cannot be sure. Before Megiddo he was silent; how soon afterwards he began his active prophecy we do not know. There are those who think his famous temple address was delivered on the occasion when the body of Josiah was brought back to Jerusalem. If this is not the actual time when it was delivered the event of Megiddo psychologically lies in the mind of the prophet as he makes this speech. The people are discontented because their reforms have not availed in the avoidance of national calamity, and Jeremiah points out to them that it is because their reforms have been merely external that this has happened, that if they truly reformed they would be safe.

"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to -----

1. Theodore H. Robinson, A History of Israel, Vol. I, p. 431

2. Carl Heinrich Cornill, The Prophets of Israel, p. 100

your fathers, from of old even for evermore." Jeremiah 7:3-7

We know that in no uncertain terms Jeremiah criticised the policies of the new king Jehoiakim, at the same time praising Josiah.

"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by injustice; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not his hire; that saith, I will build me a wide house and spacious chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou strivest to excel in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Was not this to know me? saith Jehovah. But thine eyes and thy heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for shedding innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah, his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." Jeremiah 22:13-19

I am inclined to think that Megiddo with its subsequent political situation at home was the event which gave Jeremiah his real start as a national prophet. His Scythian songs had been earlier, and they do not seem to represent a national utterance in the same sense that his later works do. Now that the reforms had failed, that the people had lost some of their smugness there was chance for Jeremiah to get in and tell the people about their real needs, about the right sort of reform, they needed religious leadership. I am even ready to suggest that it was this national need, following upon the failure of the Deuteronomic reform that stimulated the mind of Jeremiah to think out the sort of reforms that Judah really needed.

C. Carchemish - Egypt's hope of securing world power was soon dissipated by a decisive battle at Carchemish, not with the by-this-time defunct Assyrian power but with the new master of the world, Babylon.

"And any expectation of success that Necho may have cherished was finally dissipated by the fateful battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. Here, on the banks of the Euphrates, he was utterly overthrown, and there perished the last chance Egypt ever had of claiming the hegemony of civilization. The date marks the end of an era in world history. Till this point there has always been the possibility of the recrudescence of Egypt as the story of Necho himself shows. Now that possibility definitely vanishes. It is true that the Babylonian empire never made a serious attempt to include Egypt among its subject states, and that the country remained nominally independent till near the end of the sixth century, but its day was over, and from the time when Cambyses established the Persian government there, Egypt has seldom been able to claim autonomy, and has never, save in the period following Alexander, begun to approach the position of a world power."

1.

The events and attitudes in Judah subsequent to Carchemish belong properly in our next discussion on Babylonian influences.

5. Conclusion -

"So far, then, as we can now read the signs of the times from Jeremiah's point of view, there were three elements in the external situation likely to impress the mind of a prophet. There was first the known existence of a new group of formidable warlike peoples - Medes, Scythians, Cimmerians - on the northern frontiers of civilization. Next there was the threatened collapse of the Assyrian empire under the pressure of these vigorous races, which meant the dissolution of the whole established system of international relations. Lastly there was the dread of an invasion by these barbarians, an invasion whose imagined horrors surpassed all previous experience."

2.

The barbarian groups which Jeremiah feared did not master the world when the old order passed away, but rather did the older and more civilized Babylonians, destined destroyers of Jerusalem and Jewish national life, come into power, after a brief period of Egyptian ascendancy had undermined Jewish democracy and destroyed religious idealism.

1. Theodore H. Robinson, A History of Israel, Vol. I, p. 416

2. John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, p. 41

Chapter V - Babylon, the Avenging Hand of Jehovah

1. The effects of Carchemish

A. - A short period of freedom - The battle of Carchemish marked the end of Judah's complete subservience to Egypt and gave to her a short period in which she was nominally independent. Nebuchadrezzar, the prince in command of the Babylonian forces, was called home shortly after the victory to make sure his strength at home, lest insurrection should arise now that his father Nabopolassar had just died. Otherwise he might at that time have continued his march into the west and reduced the small nations to ^{state of} ~~the~~ tributaries. As it was, it was only the foolish who thought that the national freedom was more than a temporary matter. Jeremiah certainly realized clearly that Babylonian domination was inevitable and as such must be accepted as the will of God.

"Politically, the fourth year of Jehoiakim, in which Nebuchadrezzar won his great victory over Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish on the Euphrates, was the turning point of the age. Jeremiah at once grasped the situation: he saw that Nebuchadrezzar was destined to achieve further successes; he greeted him with the ode of triumph in c. 46, and declared that the whole of Asia would fall under his sway (c. 25), implying thereby what he afterwards taught explicitly, that the safety of Judah lay in yielding to the inevitable, and accepting the condition of dependence upon Babylon." 1.

Jeremiah took advantage of this lull in international affairs to write down his earlier prophecies and present them to the king, a narrative of which we have preserved in the thirty-sixth chapter. Psychologically this was a good time in which to write up these old prophecies, just as our present age is an auspicious one in which to bring out books discussing the general trends which led to the Great War and determining upon modes of action in case the seemingly imminent con-

1. S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 248

flict should arise. In moments of comparative calm men need to review past history and prepare themselves rationally for future contingencies in which action will be required. Jeremiah's prophecies were not favorably received; perhaps they smacked too much of criticism of the current administration.

B. Vassalage to Babylon

"...in or about the year 601 B.C. the Chaldean armies were in Palestine and reduced the country as far as the Egyptian frontier. Jehoiakim transferred his alliance without delay to the new authority, and for three years accepted Babylonian domination." 1.

Jehoiakim on this occasion apparently had sense enough to yield gracefully to the inevitable.

2. Egyptian-incited revolt and its outcome - The ties which united Jehoiakim to Egypt were not easily forgotten by either party. In this period as in the one previous to Carchemish Egypt is ever on the horizon, altho she could have had little hope of gaining anything much. At this particular time she incited Judah to revolt against Babylon, probably on the basis of vain promises of assistance.

"But in 598 B.C. or 597 B.C. he withheld tribute, possibly owing to Egyptian intrigues. Necho must have known that he had no hope of recovering his empire, and that there was a very real danger lest his own country should be invaded by the Chaldeans. It probably seemed to him that he would be safest if he could see one or two independent kingdoms between himself and Babylonia, and that even if he could not achieve this end, he would at least give Nebuchadrezzar some trouble. For some reason or other, the Babylonian king was unable to make an immediate expedition to the west, but stirred up raiding bands from the neighboring tribes. Before his armies could be set in motion, Jehoiakim died." 2.

This raid on Jerusalem, described for us in the twenty-fourth chapter

1. Theodore H. Robinson, A History of Israel, p. 434

2. ibid, p. 435

of II Kings, was followed in about two or three months by a visit from the Babylonian army. This army removed from the city the new young king Jehoiachin and his mother with the flower of the people, carrying them off into captivity, and much of the temple treasure likewise fell into the hands of the conquerors. Nebuchadrezzar set up Zedekiah, another of the sons of Josiah, to be king in Jerusalem, a fairly generous arrangement considering the trouble to which he had been put to secure the land.

3. The time of Zedekiah

A. The exiles - It must be borne in mind that the year 597 represents an important division in Hebrew history, for it meant that there came to be two separate groups of people with divergent experiences, and there is no doubt that we may look to the exiles in Babylon as the superior group of the two, the people from whom is to appear the finished Judaism.

"We cannot overestimate the effect upon Jeremiah himself, and through him and Ezekiel upon the subsequent history of Israel's religion, of this drastic separation in 597 of the exiles of Judah from the remnant left in the land. After suffering for years the hopelessness of converting his people, the Prophet at last saw an Israel of whom hope might be dared. It was not their distance which lent enchantment to his view, for he gives proof that he can descry the dross still among them, despite the furnace through which they have passed. But the banished were without doubt the best of the nation, and now they had 'dreed their weird', gone through the fire, been lifted out of the habits and passions of the past, and chastened by banishment - pensive and wistful, as exile alone can bring men to be." 1.

When the people in Jerusalem exulted because Jehovah had shown that they were the superior and favored ones, while the evil and less pleasing people to Jehovah had been carried into exile, Jere-

1. George Adam Smith, Jeremiah, p. 240



miah enunciated the well known parable of the two baskets of figs, wherein the good figs are compared to the exiles, while the people left in Jerusalem are figured forth as the bad figs, of no use to anyone. (c. 24) Jeremiah further showed his interest in the exiles by a letter that he wrote to them, (c. 29) in which he tells them that their time in captivity will be long, that the sensible thing for them to do is to settle down in the new land, rear children, carry on business and be contented knowing that they can worship Jehovah there as well as in the homeland. This letter contains in it the germs of all the later policies of the Jews, condemned to wander forever over the earth without a homeland.

We might make an interesting study of the exiled community in Babylon and of its great spiritual leader, Ezekiel, but it is not within the scope of this present study to do so. It is merely important for us to remember that this significant group is living and developing in Babylon all the time that we are discussing conditions in the homeland.

B. The political and international set-up - At the court of Zedekiah there were two political parties - the pro-Egyptian which advocated alliance with Egypt to gain freedom from Babylon, and the pro-Babylonian party, which stood for political quiescence in a status quo that was probably for the best.

"Within the state there were two parties, the one favoring Egypt and the other pro-Babylonian. To the former belonged, as it seems, the greater number of the new nobility, and to the latter men like Jeremiah, the family of Shaphan and, perhaps, the king himself - could he but have been king in reality and not in name alone. The intrigues of the former class were incessant; Egypt was very near, and Babylon was far away, and it was natural for such people

to look no further than a limited horizon. It may well be that the death of Necho and the accession of Psammetichus II in 593 B.C. seemed to the dominant party in Jerusalem an opportunity for a fresh movement. It may be true that Psammetichus himself had no desire to resume the task in which Necho had failed, but it is clear that the appearance of a new and vigorous king aroused the hopes of all who resented the Babylonian authority. Unrest made itself manifest in Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Phoenicia, and an attempt was made to secure the adherence of Zedekiah. But perhaps owing to the influence of Jeremiah and his friends, perhaps because it was discovered that Psammetichus did not intend after all, to take the matter up seriously, perhaps because the facts of the intrigue became known at Babylon, and prompt measures were taken to forestall rebellion, the threatened storm passed off. But with the accession of Apries (the Hophra of the Old Testament) in 588 B. C., the revolt broke out afresh, and this time matters were more serious. The two peoples chiefly involved were Judah and Ammon, for the rebellion was not universal, and it seems that both Edom and Philistia remained faithful to Babylon. Certainly the rebels had good grounds for relying on Egyptian support." 1.

We see then that there was a general restlessness among the Babylonian subject states, due not so much to actually bad conditions of government, but rather to the machinations of Egypt. Among the petty states themselves Tyre seems to have been the leader of the revolutionary feeling, partly because her own impregnable island position made her afford to be daring, partly because independence would bring her more riches from her own commerce. The more of the situation we see the more does Egypt appear to us as a major factor in the impending final destruction.

"For a time Zedekiah was loyal; then he began the dangerous policy of sending his messengers to Egypt to hire horses and traps. He appears before us as a weakling, and his treachery becomes a blot on his character; he had broken his solemn oath by Yahweh, and must not expect to prosper. Egyptian policy was now more active and Psammetichus II in his fourth year (c. 590 B. C.) made an expedition into Palestine, though not perhaps for military reasons. It was left for his successor Hophra (Apries) to undertake energetic efforts to gain - if need be by force - fresh allies in order to recover Palestine for Egypt. Edom, Moab, Ammon and Tyre and Sidon were in secret alliance with Zedekiah (Jeremiah 27 sq.): on one side were prophets, like Hananiah, declaring that the Babylonian wooden yoke would be broken;

1. Theodore H. Robinson, A History of Israel, Vol. I, pp. 437, 438

on the other was Jeremiah, maintaining that Nebuchadrezzar was Yahweh's servant, and the yoke one of iron that could never be shattered. Among the exiles, too, there were brave hopes of a dawning freedom. The occasion called forth a document most famous in the history of Judaism. Jeremiah wrote a letter in which he enjoined the exiles to settle down quietly and seek the good of the land, for their welfare was bound up with it (29). It established a precedent, laying down the correct attitude of Jewish exiles to the government of the country, while, at the same time, the prophet insisted that, although the exiles might be far removed from the temple at Jerusalem, Yahweh was none the less able to hearken to them." 1.

C. Jeremiah's activities - Jeremiah was an ardent supporter of the Babylonian regime, and he took every opportunity that offered to object to alliance with Egypt and to claim the necessity for loyalty to Babylon, the chosen of Jehovah. It was during this time that he appeared wearing the yoke which he said indicated that the exile would be long (chs. 27, 28). His task of arousing the people to the actual political situation was a hopeless one even before he started, for the pro-Egyptian party was strong, and the people wanted to revolt, and hence wanted to be told that they ought to revolt. Trouble was ahead.

D. The siege and fall of Jerusalem - When in 588 Zedekiah refused the tribute the answer was not long in coming. Nebuchadrezzar sent an army to invest the city, and this time there was to be no leniency. The people in Jerusalem were thoroughly scared, and in their terror applied to Egypt, and help was sent.

"Hophra attempted to draw off the investing forces. His movements were no doubt part of a greater effort to seize the Phoenician coast. The siege of Jerusalem was temporarily raised, and the people, as ever, indulged in the wildest expectations. Jeremiah's gloomy warning that the Chaldeans would certainly return again naturally did not alleviate his lot (Jer. 37). Hophra's army was defeated, the investing troops returned, and the plight of Jerusalem was worse than

1. The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. III, pl 401

before." 1.

After the Egyptians had been dealt with, the Babylonians returned to the siege in deadly earnestness.

Jeremiah was one of the most prominent figures in Jerusalem during the siege. He went around urging the people to surrender, that all they could do would be to prolong the suffering of famine and slaughter before they would eventually be forced to surrender in any event. This sort of activity made him about as popular as men bearing the epithet of traitor usually are among their countrymen in times of national crisis. He tells them that in spite of the help that they are getting from Egypt they shall yet fall into the hands of the Chaldeans (c. 37) and that especially because they have broken their word and are trying to reclaim the servants which in time of national calamity they had released. While the siege was lifted by Egypt Jeremiah tried to leave the city to see about some business affairs in Anathoth, but he was arrested as a deserter to the Babylonians, a not unnatural supposition considering his open advocacy of that very act both as a nation and as individuals. From then on to the end he seems to have been kept in rather close confinement, but even in prison King Zedekiah was forced to come and ask of him what would happen, and relentlessly Jeremiah has but one answer, that the will of Jehovah was that they surrender to the Chaldeans at their gates.

"Unceasingly Jeremiah urged surrender and although he was naturally accused of weakening the morale of the soldiers it is evident that he did not stand alone (21:9, 38:4). Divided counsels rent the unhappy city, and while he himself did not 'fall away' to the enemy (37:14), he was convinced that reliance upon Egypt was the wrong

1. The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. III, p. 401

policy - better surrender to a Semite foe than join a weak and constantly faithless Egypt. Dissension and famine did their work, and at last, on the ninth of the fourth month of the eleventh year, the walls of the city were breached (Jer. 39:2). Zedekiah and the army endeavored to cross the Jordan, but the attempt to remove the government failed." 1.

Zedekiah was captured, saw his sons killed and then was blinded. All but the very lowest classes of the people were carried into captivity. The city of Jerusalem was burned to the ground. Jeremiah received good treatment because Babylon judged that he had been of value in bringing about the fall of the city. He was allowed to choose whether he would go to Babylon or remain behind, and he elected the latter.

There is sometimes question raised as to why Jeremiah was as vociferously pro-Babylonian as he was. I think there are several good reasons. The first of these is that a break from Babylon meant the breaking of sacred treaty obligations, considered a very serious matter in those days. Another good reason is that history had repeatedly taught them that trust in Egypt was bound to be misplaced. Then I think that in the mind of the prophet Babylon loomed so inevitable in the situation as to represent the will of Jehovah working itself out in history. Jeremiah also had a strong sense of the moral lacks of his people making necessary a drastic punishment of some sort; in fact, we never lose in his prophecy the idea that the fall of Jerusalem is a moral retribution sent of Jehovah.

4. The aftermath - Most people would shake their heads and close the book after reading the fall of Jerusalem. The prophets might do that, but only because they wished to begin afresh in a new book. Now the old political state with all its entanglements was gone, they

1. The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. III, pp. 401,402

could start to build in earnest the new order they desired.

"To a Jeremiah, however, ready to renounce temple and ritual, the destruction was the prelude to reconstruction. From the fulfillment of his worst anticipations he could pass to the new era which would arise out of the ruins of the city. Events had justified his policy of submission to Babylon, and a new chapter was now opened in the relation between the prophet and his country." 1.

Jeremiah joined the community of Gedaliah, the governor, at Mizpah. Here things went very happily indeed for a while, and we may picture the aged prophet in prosperity and quiet writing down those passages of hope, which shine brightly in his rather somber book (chs. 30,31). He could picture the restoration of a united kingdom, but best of all he could see in vision a time when his people would possess that of which no besieging army, no foreign ruler, no tyrant, priestly or princely, could rob them, a covenant with God in their own hearts, a knowledge individually possessed of Jehovah and His will. To the process of history with all its vicissitudes of material fortune the answer of an inner, spiritual and personal experience is triumphant and convincing, and it is Jeremiah, who lived thru as troublesome a period of history as any man could know, who out of his struggles first sensed that spiritual answer.

1. The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. III, p. 402

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Chapter VI. - Non-Political Influence of Egypt and
Mesopotamia on Judah and Jeremiah

1. Introduction - As Simkhovitch has so admirably pointed out, a mere knowledge of the political documents does not necessarily give us a knowledge of an age of history. It is essential that with imagination we try to visualize the everyday life which made up the sum of existence for most people. This is a much harder task than the writing of political history, but one that is more heart-warming. It is just because excavations in Palestine have yielded a great supply of the objects of common life rather than exotic articles that surrounded king and court that many of us have an enthusiastic interest in that work, quite incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

".....Minos and Tutankhamun are certainly more spectacular than are the nameless and forgotten potters and housewives to whom the Palestine excavator is privileged to give a fresh lease of life upon earth. But they are spectacular because they are wholly abnormal.....The commonplace things of life are the true matter of life. A humdrum existence in office, shop, or study is the real existence of a man: the timetable of his daily routine is his essential biography. He never gets his name into the newspapers unless he does something exceptional and off the beaten track.

So it is that from the common things, forming the ordinary yield of a Palestinian excavation, we get a truer picture of the life and culture of the country than from the deposits made in an exceptional rich tomb." 1.

Excavations in Palestine have also shown that to a remarkable degree the Hebrews were an imitative people, that they had almost no creative ability, unless it be in the higher realms of religion, ethical monotheism. The objects of their everyday life show the influence of one and another of their more creative neighbors. So it is my purpose in this chapter to indicate some of these imitations in the material and ideal world, which existed in the Judah of Jeremiah's time.

1.R.A.S. Macalister, A Century of Excavation in Palestine, pp. 208,209

2. Commercial relations in the Near-East - We are so likely to fix our attention on the movements of armies of militants that we often fail to see the more constantly moving armies of merchants thruout the whole Near-East in all of the Biblical period.

"It must not be supposed, however, that there was no intercourse between Egypt and Palestine except in connexion with these political complications. The trade relations which were initiated by Solomon who 'had horses brought out of Egypt' (I Kings 10:28) doubtless continued thru all the period of the monarchy. The road from southern Judah across the Isthmus of Suez was thronged with travelling merchants and their caravans, and galleys plied from the coast of Syria to the mouths of the Nile; and this peaceful penetration went on all the more vigorously whilst the war-trumpets were silent. As Professor Macalister says (Century of Excavation in Palestine, p.246) 'The large number of small Egyptian objects which have been found in this country make it probable that intercourse with Egypt was literary as well as commercial.'" 1.

Basic to the carrying on of trade relationships there seems to have been a general language used and understood by all the people thruout the area. One of the things that makes the Scythians so fearsome in the eyes of Jeremiah is that they are "a nation whose language thou understandest not" (5:15)

One of the most vivid descriptions of the commerce of the period is to be found in the twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, where he shows Tyre as the exchange center, the middle-man, probably because of her advantageous position on the coast, of the eastern world. He describes what each nation sends to this great trading center, and Judah is listed among those who send their produce to be exchanged.

"Judah and the land of Israel they were thy traffickers: they traded for thy merchandise wheat of Minnith, and pannag, and honey, and oil and balm." Ezek. 27:17

1. Edward H. Sugden, Israel's Debt to Egypt, p. 43

In exchange for these things Judah received the luxuries that her barren soil was unable to produce. There were the rich adornments of the women that Jeremiah mentions in 4:30. There was the frankincense burned to the gods (6:20). There probably was a fairly large demand for this incense. The perfume altar found at Taanach indicates that incense was used in private worship, and a jar of incense found at the high place at Gezer shows a general use of this type of public worship. ¹God and silver likewise had to be brought to Palestine from various places (10:9). Our glimpses into the commercial life of the time give us a picture of a busy world in which products were fairly generally shared. In this commercial world Judah occupied a rather central position, for products passing in caravans from north to south had to go thru Palestine, and the rigors of sea travel made land travel much more prevalent than it might be at present.

These caravans kept Palestine from becoming isolated from the larger world in which she was situated. We have evidence that Jeremiah knew something of conditions in Babylon and especially of the way they tended to deal with captive peoples, in the letter that he wrote to the exiles out there. In this letter he urges his people to settle down and live normal family lives in Babylon. This reflects his knowledge of the fact that the Babylonians were kind to their captives, allowed them to live in their own communities, to have all the freedom and privileges the land afforded, except that they were not allowed to leave. Out of this considerate attitude of Babylon grew the letter of Jeremiah to the captives, which, as I have stated above, became one of the fundamental documents for determining the policies of Jews living in foreign countries.

Jeremiah also came to know a good deal about Egypt, its history and its characteristics. Naturally this knowledge was extended when at the end of his life he was taken into that land as an unwilling captive of his own people.

"In the prophecies about Egypt in Isa. 18, 19, and 20; in Jer. 43, 44, and 46; and in Ezek. 29-32, there are many allusions to the topography, history, and customs of Egypt which demonstrate the accurate knowledge of Egyptian matters in Israel during the two centuries preceding the Exile; these can be easily verified, and there is no need to mention them in detail." 1.

Since the commercial life was one of the chief forms of contact it is naturally in the field of legal life that the Hebrews were profoundly influenced by their Assyrian neighbors, who seem to have had a special gift along that line. According to Langdon the Babylonian and Hebrew attitudes toward property rights were similar.

"Babylonians and Hebrews emphasized the notion of property rights and especially the necessity of keeping family estates intact." 2.

Jeremiah illustrates the importance of the family property by the fact that even in great personal trouble in the midst of the siege of the city he redeemed a piece of family land (32:15ff, 37:11f). This act of Jeremiah, besides representing the importance of family land, shows also a note of calmness and hope, for if he had not believed that there would be a return to the good ways of the fathers, to the lands which God had given them he would not have redeemed his land.

The form of the contract and deed were also taken by the Hebrews from Babylon. The Babylonians were great makers of contracts; many relationships were expressed in this definite manner.

1. Edward H. Sugden, Israel's Debt to Egypt, pp. 191, 192
2. Stephen Langdon, Lectures on Babylonia and Palestine, p. 86

"Purchase-deeds are mentioned in Babylonia as early as the law of Hammurabi. The requirements are remarkable for their strictness. 'If anyone buys silver or gold or a male or female slave or an ox or an ass or anything else from the son or slave of anyone without assessor and written deed, he shall be treated as a thief and be put to death.' Two such deeds, belonging to the years 649 and 651 were found in Gezer. They are, after the Babylonian style, clay tablets with cuneiform inscriptions in the Assyrian language. As cuneiform writing cannot possibly have been used in Gezer at that time this discovery proves that the use of such deeds in Palestine must be very much older, although the Old Testament contains no example of them previous to Jeremiah's time. When Jeremiah bought from his cousin a piece of ground in his native town of Anathoth he wrote, as he himself tells us (32:10), the deed of sale on a sheet, sealed it, and took witnesses. Their names would, of course, appear on the deed itself." 1.

In the field of industry Israel had much to learn from her neighbors. The pottery, examples of which are very numerous in the excavations, is to the eye that can read it a very clear record of the increasing and receding influences of various foreign nations. The imitative mood is clear here; let them see another pattern of pottery than their own rather crude native product, and they would immediately produce an inartistic and unimaginative but unmistakable imitation of it.

"The Hebrews may at first have been unwilling to imitate these foreign imports, but after a time they certainly set themselves to do so. The stamps on the jug-handles found in excavations in the south of Palestine - the first words are 'to the king,' followed by the names of the places where they were made, Hebron, Ziph, Socho, or Memshath - show that, in addition to numerous private workshops, there were royal factories. These were probably situated in those places where there were close potter organizations in post-Exilic times. The stamps themselves of course again reveal foreign influence. They are either scarabs, after the Egyptian practice, or winged sun disks, in imitation of Assyrio-Persian models. The brick kilns also, which provided the material commonly used in house-building, seem to have developed into something like royal factories." 2.

I think that in 18:1-4 we may have the visit of Jeremiah to one of these early pottery factories. Here as he watched the potter shape the clay, he saw the divine agency working in human history

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1. Alfred Bertholet, A History of Hebrew Civilization, pp.229,230
 2. ibid, p.216

reworking clay that had proved intractable, but never despairing of making something useful from His material.

3. The commerce of ideas - Many of the aspects of ancient civilizations reveal themselves as so similar thruout the various nations of antiquity that it is difficult to assign the origin of ideas or of ways of doing things to any one nation.

Music is one of the things that seems to have been most common to all peoples. It is difficult to tell when the various types of instruments arose. The lyre, or type of stringed instrument is supposed to have come into Israel thru Assyria. So that the voice of mirth (25:10) which is to cease was accompanied by the lyre, invented perhaps in the land to which the Jews are going into captivity.

There is in Jeremiah a very evident literary influence of Amenophis IV, who ruled in Egypt c.1350B.C. I am not able in any detail to trace the means by which Jeremiah came to know this psalm, but the similarity is too striking to be accidental.

"In the Teaching of Amenophis the good man is described:
'The truly tranquil man, he setteth himself aside;
He is like a tree grown in a plot;
It grows green, it doubles its yield,
It stands in the presence of its lord,
Its fruit is sweet, its shade is pleasant,
And its end is reached in the garden'

And Jeremiah 17:8

'He shall be as a tree planted by the waters,
That spreadeth out its roots by the river,
And shall not fear when heat cometh,
But its leaf shall be green;
And shall not be careful in the year of drought,
Neither shall cease from yielding fruit.'" 1.

Breasted likewise discusses this influence and says:

"We cannot doubt that the prophet Jeremiah was acquainted with Amenemope's picture of the two trees." 2.

1. Edward H. Sugden, Israel's Debt to Egypt, p. 168

2. James Henry Breasted, The Dawn of Conscience, p. 367

3. *Barton's Date Archaeology and The Bible*, p. 76

A similarity has sometimes been traced between the social ideas of the early Egyptian prophets and the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament.

"A remarkable appreciation of the rights of the common people is revealed in an Egyptian story, called the 'Tale of the Eloquent Peasant,' - a story which has come down to us in copies made before 1800 B.C. It has been claimed that this tale indicates the existence of a social conscience in Egypt analogous to that of the Hebrew prophets." 1.

In Jeremiah such passages as 7:6 and 22:3 show this strong feeling of social justice, of the rights of the more unfortunate classes of society.

There were also prophets in Assyria. They were not largely social reformers but rather those who worked thru dreams and omens. Altho Jeremiah himself was not at all that kind of a prophet, he has in his denunciation of prophets of that type a reflection of the fact that such men still existed in Israel.

"The Hebrew prophets as late as the time of Jeremiah often received their divine messages in dreams. (See Jer. 23:27) Assyria had something of the same ideas as Israel as to the revelations of deity to a prophet, but she lacked Israel's ethical deity." 2.

4. Assyrian cults - It is because of the general widespread cult pattern of the near east, difficult to trace the influence of Assyrian cults on Hebrew religion. Some things were common to both from quite an early period, while certain new practices came in at the time of Manasseh.

The concept of each city having its own deity probably sprang up in Mesopotamia where city states had early been common. This found its way into Palestine at a fairly early time and the following statement of Langdon tended to become true there as well as in -----

1. George A. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 524

2. ibid, p. 524

Assyria:

"The god of each city was predominantly worshipped there and in that vicinity." 1.

Jeremiah denounces this situation as being contrary to ethical monotheism when he says:

"for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah." 2:28

Langdon makes another statement of a common Babylonian practice which clarifies a passage in Jeremiah.

"In case a house were to be purified sacrifices were made on its roof." 2.

Jeremiah likewise protests the futility of the essentially magic practice.

"the houses upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink-offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger." (32:29)

The Assyrian domination over Judah brought in new forms of the fertility worship, Astarte appearing under the title of the Queen of Heaven - her worship thus being connected with star and sun worship.

"The series of Esarhaddon's Egyptian campaigns began in 675 B.C., and after the conquest of Egypt by Ashurbanipal (669-626 B.C.), the Assyrian power hemmed in Judah on every side. This fact is vividly reflected in the religious policy of Manasse. Assyrian deities were worshipped in Jerusalem; the symbols of Astarte were restored, houses were built for the sacred prostitutes in Jehovah's city, the Babylonian star-cultus - the worship of the host of Heaven - was openly practised, while statues of the horses of Shamash, the Sun-god were erected at the entry of the Temple. It has been pointed out that Parbar in I Chronicles 26:18 is Barbar, the Babylonian Sun-temple in Sippar. The mourning for the Babylonian Tammuz could be heard in the streets of Jerusalem. Those who raised protests in the name of Jehovah were persecuted." 3.

1. Stephen Langdon, Lectures on Babylonia and Palestine, p. 100

2. ibid, p. 109

3. Norman H. Baynes, Israel Amongst the Nations, pp. 91,92

Making cakes as sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven was one of the forms of worship that seems to have been quite prevalent. Jeremiah protests against this practice in 7:18, in his temple address. When his people were at a much later time taken into Egypt and the women turned to^{the} worship of the Queen of Heaven, Jeremiah again protested. The answer of the women was that at the time of the Deuteronomic reform they had given up this practice, and they had had bad luck ever since. (44:5-19).

"Jeremiah 44:17-19 leaves no doubt as to the hold which the worship of Astarte, the Queen of Heaven, had upon Israel. There the women refuse to abandon the practices which had been followed by their ancestors in Judah for many generations of offering drink-offerings and cakes and burning incense to the Queen of Heaven." 1.

Closely associated with worship of the Queen of Heaven is worship of the Host of Heaven, evidently a Babylonian star cultus. Jeremiah, in a very vivid passage protests also against this practice.

"At that time, saith Jehovah, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves; and they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, which they have loved, and which they have served, and after which they have walked, and which they have sought, and which they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried, they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth." 8:1,2

As I have stated above, it is difficult to determine where many of these cultic patterns originated. The concepts behind all these practices had been familiar to the Canaanites and Hebrews for generations, but it is likely that the Assyrian conquest brought in new rituals and gave a new impulse to the cultic practices.

1. J. Garrow Duncan, Digging up Biblical History, Vol. II, p. 120

Conclusion

The completion of a study of this sort is likely to leave the student with a feeling of futility, a feeling that the thing he has been trying to say has somehow eluded his pen and slipped thru his words. To bolster up his own sense of accomplishment as well as to give finish to the work it is well to include this summary of the points which he has tried to make.

1. A survey of the critical problems of the book of necessity is the preface to any careful work that is later to be done. It was found that the Septuagint and Masoretic texts were at considerable variance in the Book of Jeremiah, that these differences could be accounted for by divergent developments of the same original text. It was found that our present book is a collection of genuine oracles of Jeremiah, of narratives of his life and times, and of exilic and post-exilic additions. The oracles on foreign nations were rejected from the text as being essentially non-Jeremianic; the Deuteronomic passage was accepted as being in kernel true, while the authenticity of the call was completely upheld.

2. There was prevalent in the near east a myth-ritual pattern concerning itself with a rising-dying god, closely connected with the changing seasons, known in Palestine as Adonis. He had connected with him a female consort, who stood for the female principle in deity. These two were worshipped at high places by sensual rites and by sacrifice. Associated with Adonis was Moloch the king-god, who was chiefly worshipped by the burning of human victims. The sensual worship at high places as well as the Moloch worship and the whole sacrificial system were condemned by Jere-

miah as being displeasing to Jehovah. Driven to thought by the concept of a rising-dying god he developed the concept of a living God. He definitely gave to Jehovah the functions of fertilization which had belonged to Adonis. The function of a healer-god, whose symbol was the serpent, was also assigned to Jehovah.

3. The northern kingdom of Israel fell in 721 B.C. and became a province of the Assyrian empire. As the Assyrian empire gradually became weaker the Judean policy was gradually to extend more and more influence over its northern neighbor. The literature produced in the north, particularly the E document, the Books of Kings, and Hosea, became part of the southern literature and was adapted for its own specific purposes. When Josiah carried thru the Deuteronomic reform in his own kingdom he likewise carried it out in the north. It is the theory of Welch that ~~Josiah~~ was killed at Megiddo because he was much too successful in his attempt to control the northern territory.

Some scholars place undue emphasis on the influence that the northern kingdom had on Jeremiah. He had, in my opinion, no unusual interest in this province, altho his natural sensitivity might have made him more keen to its problems than most other people would have been. He reminded Judah to take warning from the fate which had befallen her northern sister and repent. He included both nations in the restoration which was to come. He knew and was influenced by northern literature, especially by Hosea, to whom he is most akin in spirit. The downfall of the northern kingdom may also have had its effect on the imagery that he used in describing the coming doom of his own people.

4. Perhaps the main fact of world history in the time of

Jeremiah was the fall of Assyria, a gradual decay rather than a sudden crash. After the death of Assurbanipal Judah sensed the relaxed reins and made a gesture of independence in the shape of a religious reform, denying the Assyrian deities and setting up a central worship of Jehovah in Jerusalem. It is so hard for us to understand why Jeremiah would have supported this unwise step that we are inclined to think that all of the significant facts in the matter are not before us.

An important factor in the disintegration of Assyria was the coming of the barbarian bands from the north, a group which eventually brought about the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. These bands, particularly the Scythians, frightened Judah considerably, without apparently doing much harm. Some of the most powerful poetry in Jeremiah is his cycle of Scythian songs, written at the time, and later modified to fit the Babylonian invasion.

Egypt was ineffectually allied to Assyria, apparently with the purpose of maintaining the status quo. On one of his annual northern campaigns Pharaoh Necho killed King Josiah at Megiddo, for reasons which are not clear to us. He himself was finally defeated with his allies at Carchemish in 604 B.C., and Babylon became master of the world.

5. After the battle of Carchemish Judah enjoyed a short period of freedom and then inevitably became a vassal to Babylon. Egypt soon stirred up a revolt against Babylon; Jerusalem was besieged, and the élite of the population were carried into exile in Babylon (597 B.C.). Babylon set on the throne of Judah Zedekiah, a member of their own royal family. He was weak and allowed the pro-

Egyptian party to have undue power at his court. Jeremiah was always strongly in favor of submission to Babylon. He wrote a letter to the exiled community urging them to be patient and to live normal active lives in their new home, for the exile would be long. In spite of Jeremiah's efforts Judah again broke her treaty arrangements with Babylon, and altho Egypt, with its feeble army, tried to help, the city was besieged, fell, and was burned to the ground by the Babylonians, who now carried all but the poorest of the people into exile. Thruout the siege Jeremiah held staunchly to the viewpoint that Jehovah was on the side of Babylon, Jerusalem was destined to fall for her sins and surrender would be preferable to slaughter. He was imprisoned by his own people as a traitor, but when Jerusalem did fall he was kindly treated by the conquerors. He spent a short time, fairly happily, in the colony of Mizpah, where, all the evils of Jerusalem being swept away, he could frame his glorious prophecy of hope when every man should know God in his own spirit.

6. The steady impacts of one nation upon another in time of peace often have more penetrating influence than the more violent contacts of war. Thus, Judah, naturally an imitative nation, was permeated by influences of Egypt and Mesopotamia. She used products brought by their caravans, she adopted legal proceedings, she copied her pottery and her literature alike. The Assyrian domination accentuated the emphasis on the fertility cults and brought in some different forms of worship. All of these influences are reflected in the thought and work of Jeremiah.

I have not attempted to give a complete survey of Jeremiah or a detailed exeg^{es}is of his book. I have merely tried to throw some light on the man and his work, by tracing out some of the intricate strands of the influences which played on his life and shaped his thought. If I have to any degree illumined the age and shown how Jeremiah was a part and product of his age I have accomplished my purpose. Jeremiah was to large degree shaped by the influences of foreign nations, but to an infinitely larger degree he has himself been an influence on succeeding nations and ages.

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